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THE STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF WISCONSIN
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From the Author

265 *Newbury Street*

Boston

Mass.

Samuel Slade Benton

His Ancestors and Descendants

NON - CIRCULATING

SAMUEL SLADE BENTON
HIS ANCESTORS AND DESCENDANTS

BY

Josiah Henry Benton, Jr.

1620 1901

New York
Historical
Society

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BOSTON
1901

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THE preparation of this volume has been the recreation of hours taken from a busy life. It was at first intended to be a tribute to the memory of my grandparents, but has so far outgrown the original design that it may perhaps be called the Story of a New England Family.

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Andrew Benton

1620 1683

Andrew Benton

1620–1683

THE Bentons of New England are descended from Edward Benton and Andrew Benton, who came from England between 1630 and 1635. It is not now possible definitely to determine to what particular branch of the English family they belonged. That family was an ancient and honorable one, and was at one time quite numerous, especially in Wiltshire and in Essex. (*History of Rochford Hundred*, by Philip Benton, pp. 394 *et seq.*)

There are seven coats of arms belonging to the English Bentons, but as it is not yet possible to ascertain from which branch of the English family the Bentons of New England came, any of their descendants who covet a coat of arms must suit themselves at the risk of choosing a coat which they have no right to wear. I think, however, they may well be content to trace their lineage from Andrew and Edward Benton, plain yeomen from the English farms, who came to the new world to better their condition, and that they might own the land they tilled.

The earliest ancestor of Samuel Slade Benton of whom I have as yet found any accurate information, is Andrew Benton, who was born in England in 1620, the year in which the *Mayflower* brought the Puritans to New England. His tombstone, still standing in the "Old Center Burying Ground" near the rear wall of the First Church in Hartford, Connecticut, and doubtless erected by his son Samuel, bears this inscription:—

ANDREW
BENTON AGED
63 YEARS
HE DYED IVLY
31 ANO 1683.

He probably came from England among those who settled first at Watertown in 1630, a portion of whom went to

ANDREW BENTON 1620

Wethersfield and Hartford, Connecticut, in 1634 and 1635, and some of them to Milford in 1639.

The Indian name of Milford was Wepowage. It was purchased of the Indians by a committee for the planters, February 12, 1639, for the consideration of "6 coats, 10 blankets, 1 kettle, 12 hatchets, 12 hoes, 2 dozen knives and a dozen small glasses" (mirrors). The original settlers or "planters" are said to have come mostly from the counties of Essex, Hereford, and York, England. A number of them came with the Eaton and Davenport Company, and were at New Haven in 1638, their pastor being the Rev. Peter Prudden from Edgton, Yorkshire. While they were at New Haven they decided to settle at Wepowage at the head of a small harbor on Long Island Sound about ten miles from New Haven. Mr. Prudden preached at that time at Wethersfield, adjoining New Haven, and when he went with his church company from New Haven a number of the settlers in Wethersfield went with him, and became members of the Milford Church, organized at New Haven, August 22, 1639. These settlers from Wethersfield, of whom Andrew Benton was probably one, were from Watertown, Massachusetts, and a part of Sir Richard Saltonstall's company from Essex, England. The planters went from New Haven by the devious Indian trail, driving their cattle and other domestic animals with them, while their scanty household effects, farming utensils, and materials for a common house were taken by water. They erected a common house at the head of the harbor, and a few huts for temporary occupation, and then, as they were without the jurisdiction of any established settlement, they made a government of their own. November 20, 1639, they agreed that the power to elect officers and to manage the common interests of the plantation should be in the church only, and also that they would "guide themselves in all their doings by the written Word of God till such time as a body of laws should be established." They also chose five magistrates, directed that they should hold courts once in six weeks, and agreed as to the payments to be made by each person for the public charges, and November 24, 1640, "with the common consent and general vote of the freemen the plantation was named Milford."

The first record of Andrew Benton is in the list of the original settlers in 1639, but he is not recorded among the "free planters," which shows that he was not then in church fellowship. The Milford planters declared this to be a necessary qualification to "act in the choyce of public officers for the carrying on of public affayrs in this plantation." In the original allotment of Milford lands made in 1639, and recorded in 1646, Andrew Benton received lot 64 containing three acres, and shown on the accompanying plan. The record is: "Andrew Benton hath three acres be it more or less being bounded with a highway on the East, with George Clark Sen^r^ on the South with the comon on the West, and with Edward Riggs on the North." (*Milford Land Records*, Vol. I. p. 80.) These lots were laid out in narrow parallel strips on each side of Mill River and West End Brook, doubtless for convenience of access to water.

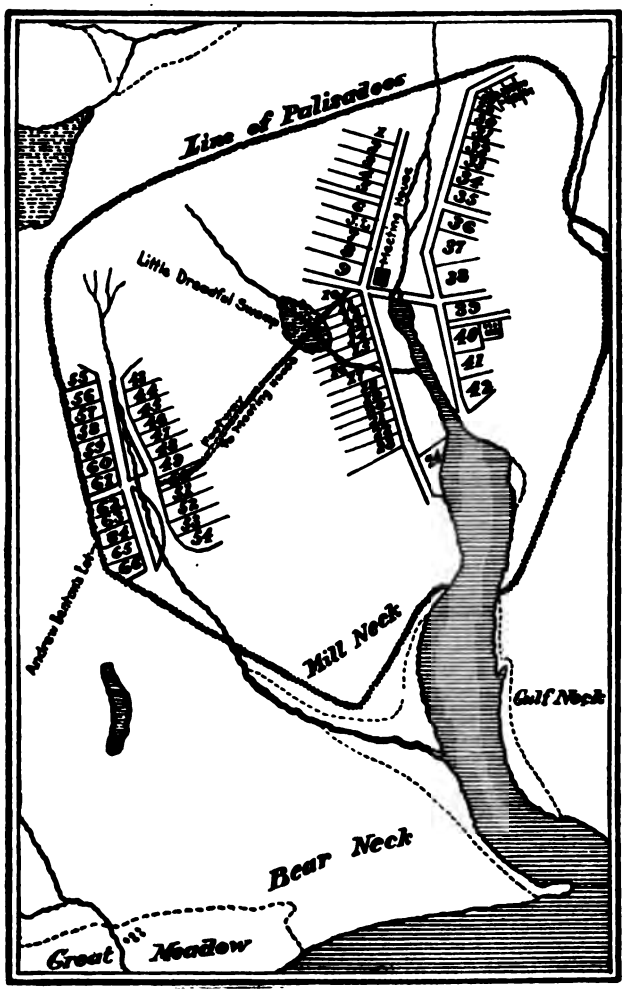
ANDREW BENTON 1620

By the original allotment each owner was required to build a good house on his lot within three years or it went back to the town, but this condition evidently was not strictly enforced. The houses of the settlers were not of logs, but were framed in the low lean-to style, and covered with split oak shingles. There were no division fences until 1645, by which time it is said most of the planters had built on their lots, though Andrew Benton may not have built until a year or two later.

All the lots were surrounded by "palisades" for common protection. These "palisades" were of the trunks of trees planted in the ground, and set so thickly that a man could not pass between them, making a fence ten or twelve feet in height, enclosing an area of nearly a mile square on both sides of the river. But for this the little settlement would probably have been destroyed at the time of the Indian combination against the white men in 1645 and 1646. At that time the settlers kept guard by sentinels every few rods along the whole line of "palisades" day and night. As early as March 10, 1640, the settlers organized themselves in military service, and provided that "every male above the age of 16 years, whether magistrates, ministers, or any other (though exempt from training, watching and warding) shall always be pro-

ANDREW BENTON 1620

[*Herewith is given a plan of the original town plot of Milford,*



projected on a scale of three inches to a mile. The lot of Andrew Benton is number 64 on the plan at the left of the plate.]

vided with and have in readiness, both a pound of powder and two pounds of bulletts or shott, and two fathoms of match for a matchlock, on penalty of 5*s.* a month for such default, in case ye amunition is to be had from ye town magazine." In 1645 the Indians set the country about Milford on fire, which did much damage to timber and meadows, although by strenuous exertions the settlers stopped the fire at the swamps on the West and North before it reached the "palisades." ANDREW BENTON 1620

The Milford Church, organized at New Haven, August 22, 1639, was formed in the following manner:—Seven persons were first chosen, who joined in covenant to be the church, and were called "the seven pillars." Others were afterwards added and joined in the covenant, making the "visible saints" who were the church. In 1640 this church chose and ordained Rev. Peter Prudden as minister. The record of the ordination in the handwriting of Mr. Prudden is as follows: "At Milford, I, Peter Prudden was called to ye office of a Pastour in this church, and ordained at New Haven, by Zachariah Whitman, Williom Fowler, Edmund Tapp, designed by ye church for that work: Zach: Whitman being ye moderator for that meeting in a day of solemn humiliation, upon ye 3d Saturday in April, being I remember ye 18th day of ye month, 1640."

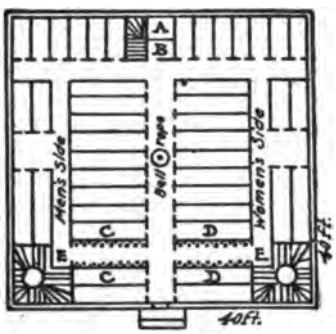
Whitman was the Ruling Elder, and Fowler and Tapp were the Deacons. Mr. Prudden had previously been ordained as a minister and had preached in England and in the Colony; but, following the primary principle of Congregationalism, that the minister derives his authority from the particular body of "visible saints" or church by which he is called, he was reordained by the Milford Church.

In 1641 a meeting-house forty feet square was erected, but was not completed for some years. The accompanying ground plan, showing the arrangement of seats, and a south view of it taken from Lambert's *History of New Haven Colony*, are interesting. It was doubtless in this house that Andrew Benton's children born in Milford were baptized. February 7, 1643, a footway was laid out to the meeting-house for the accommodation of the settlers on the west side as follows: "By

ANDREW BENTON 1620

[*The following cut represents a view of the first Meeting-House from the south; and below is the ground plan of the same building.*

The various letters represent (A) *the pulpit;* (B) *deacons' seat;* (C) *guard seats;* (D) *guard seats on the women's side of the house;* (E) *gallery stairs. The dots show the place where the guns were set.*



The bell-rope hung down in the middle aisle. These illustrations are taken from Lambert's "History of New Haven Colony."]

the brethren and inhabitants of Milford it is agreed, that a footway to the meeting house shall be allowed, (and maintayned with convenient styles) from the West End. The stiles to be maintained by bro: Nicholas Camp at the West End, and by bro: Tho. Baker at the meeting house (for the outside stiles;) and for the inner fences, each man shall maintain his stile in the most convenient place: and the passage over Little Dreadful swamp in John Fletcher's lot, shall be by a long log hewed on the upper side." Andrew and Hannah Benton often travelled this footway, for their home was on the west side of the town, and Little Dreadful swamp lay between it and the meeting-house. ANDREW BENTON 1620

In 1643 Milford became a part of the Colony of New Haven, but under the conditions contained in the following curious declaration in the *New Haven Colony Records*, Vol. I. p. 71:—

"A Generall Court held at New Haven the 23rd of October, 1643. Whereas this Plantation att first with generall ande full consent layde their foundations thatt none butt members of aproved Churches should be accounted free Burgesses, nor should any else have any vote in any Election, or power or trust in ordering of Civill affayres, in wch. way we have constantly proceeded hitherto in our whole Court wth. much comfortable fruite through God's Blessing. and whereas Stamforde, Guilforde, Yennicock (Southhold,) have upon ye same foundations and ingagements, Entered into Combination wth. vs.—This Court was now informed thatt of late there have beene some meetings and treatyes between some of Milforde ande Mr. Eaton about a Combination by which it appeareth thatt Milforde hath formerly taken in as free Burgesses, six Planters who are nott in Church ffellowship, wch. hath bred some difficulty in the passages of this treaty; butt att present it stands thus,—The Deputies for Milforde have offered in the name both of the Church ande Towne, First—thatt the present six free Burgesses who are nott Church members shall nott at any time hereafter be chosen either Deputies or into any Public trust for the Combination. Secondly, thatt they shall neither personally nor by Proxie vote att any time in the Election of Magistrates. Ande Thirdly, thatt none

ANDREW BENTON 1620

shall be admitted ffreemen or free Burgesses hereafter att Milforde butt Church members, according to the practice of New Haven; Thus farr they granted, butt in two perticulars, they ande the said six ffreemen desire Liberty. First yt. the said six ffreemen being already admitted by them, may continue to act in all proper perticular towne business wherein the Combination is nott interested, ande Secondly thatt they may vote in the Election of Deputies to be sent to the Generall Courte for the Combination or Jurisdiction wch. soe to be chosen ande sent shall alwayes be Church members. The Premises being seriously considered by the whole Courte, the Brethren did express themselves as one man clearly ande fully thatt in the foundation layde for Civill government they have attended their Lights, ande should have failed in their dutye had they done otherwise ande professed themselves carefull and resolved nott to shake the said Groundworks by any change for any respect—and Ordered that this their vnderstanding of their way and Resolution to maintain itt should be entred wth. their vote in this business as a Lasting Record. But not foreseeing any danger in yielding to Milforde wth. the forementioned Cautions, itt was by Generall Consent and vote ordered thatt the Consociation proceed in all things according to the premises."

As Andrew Benton was not admitted to the Milford Church until 1648, he was doubtless one of the six planters not in church fellowship, whose action was thus carefully guarded.

In a further division of lands in 1646, Andrew Benton received ten acres more of land (*Milford Land Records*, pp. 86, 97). In 1647 he sold, or rather exchanged, his original lot 64 for original lot 62. (*Id.*, p. 102.) Lot 64 is high land on the outer portion of the town and is still farm land. Lot 62 is at the southwest corner of the present Hill and Spring streets. The houses on Spring Street faced the east, and it is probable that Andrew Benton built his first house on lot 62. In 1648/9 he received more land, probably meadow, the record being: "Ord. that Andrew Benton shall have a piece of land for his last quarter division in the place where he propounded beyond the beaver pond." (*Id.*, p. 21.) On May 14, 1649, it was ordered that "Andrew Benton is granted liberty

to lay down his seed division and to take it up in another place where he desireth that is that which James Board laid down." (*Id.*, p. 23.) In another division in 1659/60 of meadow land the record is: "General Court, 19 March 1659/60. The number of acres that are to be laid out to each Inhabitant. Andrew Benton 8 ¾." (*Id.*, p. 54.) ANDREW BENTON 1620

Andrew Benton married first Hannah Stocking, the youngest daughter of George Stocking of Hartford, who settled first in "The New Towne," now Cambridge, Massachusetts, and went from there to Hartford as one of the first settlers in 1636. The place and date of this marriage are not shown by any record, but it was probably in 1649, at Hartford, and after he had built a house in Milford either on his original lot 64 or original lot 62.

The original record of the First Church at Milford, now in the possession of Deacon George Clark of Milford, shows that Andrew Benton was admitted to the Church March 5, 1648, and that October 13, 1650, "the wife of Andrew Benton" was admitted.

George Stocking was an active member of the First Church and prominent among the early settlers of Hartford. I think Andrew Benton and Hannah Stocking must have become acquainted while Andrew was at Watertown, or possibly while he was at Wethersfield, only three miles from Hartford, and after Andrew had settled in Milford and built him a house he went to Hartford to marry the girl he had known before he went to Milford. The distance, about seventy-five miles, from Milford to Hartford, through what was then a wilderness, was such as probably to prevent any acquaintance between them being formed after he went to Milford and Hannah's father settled in Hartford. It is easy to see why no record of this marriage is to be found. The law then required all marriages to take place before some magistrate.* It was not until October 11, 1694, that the General Court enacted that "This Court, for the sattisfaction of such as are conscienciously desirous to be marryed by the ministers of their plantations doe grant the ordayned ministers of the severall plan-

* *It is said that no marriage was solemnized by a minister in Massachusetts until* 1686. (*Mass. Hist. Soc. Proceedings*, 1858-1860, *p.* 283.)

ANDREW BENTON 1620

tations in this Colony liberty to joyne in mariage such persons as are qualifyed for the same according to law." (*Pub. Rec. Conn.*, Vol. III. p. 136.)

The marriage therefore could not have been solemnized by a minister, and the Hartford town records of that period are so incomplete as to show that marriages by magistrates were very frequently not recorded.

The original records of the First Church of Milford show that a son of Andrew Benton was baptized April 14, 1650. The record is as follows: "14 April 1650 John son of Andrew Benton, he died May following by his mother in y^e^ bed in y^e^ night." The first entry in the town record of births and deaths is October, 1653. No previous record can be found, and it is quite clear that this son John was the first child of Andrew and Hannah Benton. The church record also shows the baptism of three other children in Milford, the record being:—

"23 November 1651 Hannah daugh. of Andrew Benton."

"14 August 1653 Andrew son of Andrew Benton."

"15 April 1655 Mary daugh. of Andrew Benton."

From March, 1656, to July, 1660, the Milford Church was without a minister and there is no church record for that period.

The Milford town record, beginning October, 1653, shows the birth of three children, beginning with that of Mary, whom the church record shows to have been baptized April 15, 1655. That record is:—

"Mary Benton daughter of Andrew Benton of Milford was borne the fourteenth of April 1655. John Benton sone of Andrew Benton of Milford was borne y^e^ 7 October 1656. Samuel Benton sone of Andrew Benton of Milford was borne y^e^ 15 of August 1658."

The town records are complete and in good condition from 1658, and after July, 1660, the church records are also complete and in good condition, but neither of these records shows the birth or baptism of any child of Andrew Benton after that of Samuel, born August 15, 1658. The inventory of his estate, however, in December, 1683, shows that there were two other children of Andrew and Hannah Benton; a

son, Joseph, and a daughter, Dorothy. Joseph died August 12, 1753, and the inscription on his tombstone in Goodhill Cemetery, Kent, Connecticut, states that he was then in his ninety-third year, which shows his birth to have been about 1661. No record has yet been found of Dorothy except the statement in the inventory of her father's estate, in 1683, that she was then living and one of the children of his first wife. I think she was younger than Joseph, and that both of them were born in Hartford, and probably baptized in the First Church, the records of which at that period are lost. ANDREW BENTON 1620

I think Andrew Benton went from Milford to Hartford as early as 1660. He was elected viewer of fences in Hartford, February 16, 1663, and reëlected February 17, 1664. (*Hartford Town Votes*, pp. 119, 121.) He was a creditor in Hartford of Nathaniel Greensmith, who was executed for witchcraft at Hartford January 25, 1663, and the Court allowed payment of his debt February 4, 1664, the record being: "Feb: 4: 1664 To make a finall Issue of the payment of Nat. Greensmiths debts, the court allows out of Andrew Bentons Bill the Sum of fifteen pound & they viz: the Marshall, ensigne, & peck are to sattisfy themselves for their paines there abouts out of this estate."

The Court record also shows that he served as a juror in Hartford, in June, 1664; and at a General Assembly of the Colony of Connecticut for Election at Hartford, May 11, 1665, he was admitted and sworn as a freeman. (*Pub. Rec. Conn.*, Vol. I. p. 19.)

The form of the "Freeman's Oath" was prescribed by law and stated the essential duties of good citizenship. It was as follows:—

¶ *The Oath of a Freeman.*

I A. B. being by the P^r^uidence of God an Inhabitant, w^th^in the Jurisdiction of Conectecott, doe acknowledge myselfe to be subiecte to the Gouerment thereof, and doe sweare by the great and fearefull name of the euerliueing God, to be true and faythfull vnto the same, and doe submitt boath my p^r^son and estate thereunto, according to all the holsome lawes and orders that there are, or hereafter shall be there made, and established by lawfull authority, and that I will nether

ANDREW BENTON 1620

plott nor practice any euell ag^t the same, nor consent to any that shall so doe, but will tymely discouer the same to lawfull authority there estalished; and that I will, as I am in duty bownd, mayntayne the honner of the same and of the lawfull magestratts thereof, p^rmoting the publicke good of yt, whilst I shall soe continue an Inhabitant there; and whensoeu^r I shall giue my voate or suffrage touching any matter w^ch conserns this Comon welth being cauled thereunto, will give yt as in my conscience I shall judge, may conduce to the best good of the same, w^thout respect of p^rsons or favor of any man. Soe helpe me God in o^r Lord Jesus Christe.

Aprill the x^th, 1640. (*Pub. Rec. Conn.*, Vol. I. p. 73.)

February 26, 1656, it was ordered that not less than two magistrates should give this oath at a duly warned public meeting. (*Id.*, p. 293.)

The church records of Milford show that Andrew Benton and his wife and children were dismissed to the Hartford church in March, 1666. The records are, under the head of "Admissions": "5 March, 1648, Andrew Benton." Following this in a different handwriting, "his wife & children dismissed to Hartford March 1666," and "13 October, 1650, the wife of Andrew Benton"; following this in a different handwriting, "dismissed to Hartford March 1666." At that time the church in Hartford was the original or First Church, organized at Watertown October 11, 1633, and it was to that church that Andrew and his wife and children were dismissed.

February 12, 1669, a part of the members of the First Church organized the Second Church of Hartford, and Andrew Benton and Hannah Benton were among the original members of the Second Church who signed the covenant at the time of its organization. In the records of the Second Church of Hartford, following the names of the original members there is a list of "members and children not in full communion," and in this list is the name of Hannah Benton, doubtless the daughter of Andrew Benton, who was baptized in Milford, November 23, 1651. She died before January, 1678, when another daughter of Andrew Benton, by Anne Cole, his second wife, was born and named Hannah.

ANDREW BENTON 1620

The original records of the First Church of Hartford before 1685 are lost, and it is impossible to tell when Andrew and Hannah Benton were accepted as members of that church upon their dismissal from the Milford Church, but there is no doubt about their membership in the First Church. The town records show that in August, 1667, nearly three years before the organization of the Second Church, "the Town did desire and empower John Cole, Andrew Benton and William Edwards to correct any disorder that they shall discover in the time of public worship," and at a town meeting held February 23, 1668, "Robert Sanford and Andrew Benton chosen to be collectors for gathering of the minister's rates this year ensuing." (*Hartford Town Votes*, pp. 134, 138.) It also appears from the manuscript of Mr. Whiting, minister of the First Church who separated with a portion of the members and formed the Second Church in February, 1669, that Andrew Benton, John Cole, and two others of the church were called by Mr. Whiting, the minister, to be present with him November 22nd, 1666, "at Mr. Willys' house," when William Pitkin and others "came to speak" with Mr. Whiting and demanded full communion with the Hartford church on the ground of their English church membership. (*Hist. First Church, Hartford*, p. 200.) It is evident that Andrew Benton was prominent in the First Church from the time he went to Hartford. He stood steadily with Mr. Whiting, the associate minister, with George Stocking, his father-in-law, with John Cole, whose daughter he subsequently married as his second wife, and with the other members who opposed the methods of church government and management adopted by the minister, Mr. Stone. They regarded Mr. Stone's views and methods as opposed to the sound teachings of Thomas Hooker, pastor of the First Church from its organization in Watertown, in 1633, to his death at Hartford in 1647. The differences between these two parties in the First Church of Hartford continued during the entire period from about 1650 to 1669, and were known as the "Hartford Controversy." They divided the churches of Connecticut and the churches of New England. They caused the calling of a synod in Massachusetts which promulgated what was known as the "Half Way

ANDREW BENTON 1620

Covenant" of 1657 and produced the following extraordinary legislation by the General Court of Connecticut in 1658:

"This Court orders that henceforth no persons in this Jurisdiction shall in any way imbody themselves into Ch. estate without consent of the Generall Court & approbation of the neighbo^r Ch.s. This Court orders that there shall bee no ministry or Ch. administration entertained or attended by the inhabitants of any plantation in this Collony distinct & seperate from & in opposition to that wh^ch is openly & publickly obserued & dispenced by the settled & approued Minister of the place, except it bee by approbation of the Gen^rall Court & neighbo^r Ch^s," March 11, 1657/8. (*Pub. Rec. Conn.*, Vol. I. p. 311.)

As absence from public worship was then punished in court by a fine of five shillings for each offence (Code 1650, p. 23; *Pub. Rec. Conn.*, Vol. I. 522), this law practically compelled Andrew Benton and all who shared his views to worship with those from whom they differed in fundamental doctrine under penalty of a fine.

The real question at issue in the "Hartford Controversy" was whether the Congregationalism of Hooker and the Cambridge Platform, which recognized no authority except that of the members of each individual church, called "visible saints," should be superseded by a Congregationalism which recognized a power in the minister and in associations or synods outside of the churches to control the action of individual churches. Questions of baptism, of right to full communion by reason of church membership in other churches, of the powers of ruling elders, and countless other subordinate matters, entered into the discussion, but at bottom it was simply a contest between those who sought to restore a Presbyterian order of regulation of individual churches, and those who stood for the fundamental doctrine that Congregationalism rests upon the absolute independence of a company of "visible saints," or members of each particular church. Andrew Benton stood steadily with the minority in the First Church for the old doctrine, which was the vital principle of Congregationalism. It was only by their unflinching opposition to the majority that a reaction was stayed which would inevitably have resulted in the displacement of pure Congre-

gationalism by a form of church government that Hooker and his followers left England to escape. It is hardly too much to say that the sturdy minority of the First Church of Hartford saved New England Congregationalism from destruction. ANDREW BENTON 1620

In January, 1677, Andrew Benton and Andrew Benton, Jr., each received a lot of ten and a half acres in the division of the undivided lands which were granted by a Committee of the Proprietors to "such of the Town of Hartford as they shall see in need of the same, and as they shall judge it may be advantageous," upon condition that the grantees should not sell the same until the lots were fenced and improved. February 17, 1669, he was chosen viewer of fences. (*Hartford Town Votes*, p. 140.) He appears to have had charge of the meeting-house, for the record shows that at a town meeting December 29, 1676, "the Town gave to Andrew Benton for sweeping the meetinghouse 3 pounds per annum;" September 10, 1677, he served as juror in Hartford.

No record has yet been found to show when Hannah Stocking, the first wife of Andrew Benton, died, but it was probably about 1670. Andrew Benton married Anne Cole as his second wife, and their first child, Ebenezer, was baptized January 4, 1673. There were three other children by this marriage,—Lydia, baptized February 13, 1675, Hannah, baptized January 26, 1678, and John, baptized May 30, 1680, who doubtless died in infancy, as he was not living at the distribution of his father's estate in September, 1683.

December 12, 1680, his lands in Hartford were recorded to Andrew Benton in the *Hartford Book of Distributions*, p. 284, as follows:—

"Land in Hartford, in Connecticutt belonging to Andrew Benton & His heirs forever: One parcell of land on which his dwelling house now standeth which he bought of Capt[n] John Tallcott and John Allyn (Agents empowered by the General Court of Connecticutt May 14 1668) Containing by estimation three roods be it more or less abutting on a highway leading to Wethersfield on the East, and on a highway leading to Farmington on the North, and towards the West, and on Thomas Hosmer his land South. More one parcell of upland which he bought of the sayd John Tallcott,

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John Allyn &c containing by estimation twenty acres be it more or less, and abutts on a highway West, and on Mr. Willys and Mr. Whitings land East, and on Mr. Richards land North, and on Samuel Moody his land South. These parcells of land were formerly Nath. Greensmiths and now sold to Andrew Benton, and recorded to him March 11th, 1671. More: one parcell of upland which was given him by George Stocking to be to him and his heirs that he hath by the sayd Stocking's daughter, containing by Estimation eight acres be it more or less, and now by exchange with Samuel Moody the sayd land doth abutt on a highway on the East, and on the North, and on Sam[ll] Moody on the West and on land formerly Tho. Seldens, now Nath. Coles on the South."

The first of these parcels was at the junction of the roads leading to Wethersfield and Farmington on the west side of what was then known as Wethersfield Lane, and is now Wethersfield Avenue, and was the first lot below what is called "South Green." It was originally the homestead of Nathaniel Greensmith, who with his wife, Rebecca, was charged with having bewitched Anne Cole, and was convicted of witchcraft, and executed at Hartford, in January, 1662. After its purchase by Andrew Benton he lived there. His wife Hannah doubtless died in the house, and he and his second wife, Anne Cole, both died there. The house has been moved away, and only a portion of it is still standing, but the accompanying picture of a similar house built by Hosmer on the adjoining lot about the same time, doubtless shows the Benton house as it was when Andrew lived in it. The record of the Court as to the transfer of this place to Andrew Benton is as follows: "May 22nd, 1668, This Court empowers Mr. Sam[ll] Willys Capt[n]. Tallcott and the Secretary to make a deed of sale to Andrew Benton of Nath: Greensmiths house and land which was seized for charge expended on s[d] Greensmith and sold to G: [Goodman] Benton." (*Pub. Rec. Conn.*, Vol. II. p. 91.) In the distribution of Andrew's estate in 1685, this lot with house and barn was sold to his son, Joseph, for eighty-five pounds, and he sold it to Samuel Kellogg, June 22, 1693.

The second parcel was on the east side of what is now

Washington Street, north of the junction of Webster Street. Four acres of this lot were probably given to Andrew, Jr., by his father when Andrew was married, about 1676, and he built and lived upon it. At the death of Andrew, Sr., the remaining sixteen acres were divided equally between his four sons, Andrew, Samuel, Joseph, and Ebenezer, at the valuation of seven pounds an acre, which gave Andrew with his home lot eight acres. Afterwards sixteen acres of this property passed into the ownership of Samuel, the son of Andrew, who gave it by will to his son Moses, in 1746. Most of this sixteen acres is now included in the grounds of the "Retreat for the Insane." The third parcel of upland was limited by the conveyance of it to the children of Andrew and Hannah Stocking, and was therefore not included in the inventory or distribution of Andrew's estate.

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Anne Cole, the second wife of Andrew Benton, was said to have been bewitched when a girl by Nathaniel Greensmith and Rebecca, his wife, in 1662. A full account of this matter was given in a letter by the Rev. John Whiting, pastor of the First Church, and afterwards of the Second Church, in Hartford, to Rev. Increase Mather, in 1682, published in *Mass. Hist. Coll.*, Series IV. Vol. VIII. pp. 466-469.

This letter was entitled "An account of a Remarkable passage of Divine providence that happened in Hartford in the yeare of our Lord 1662." The part of it relating to Anne Cole specially is as follows:—

"The subject was Anne Cole (the daughter of John Cole, a godly man among us, then next neighbour to the man and woman that afterward suffered for witchcraft,) who had for some time been afflicted and in some feares about her spirituall estate: . . . She hath been and is a person esteemed pious, behaving herselfe with a pleasant mixture of humility and faith under her heavy sufferings, professing (as she did sundry times) that she knew nothing of those things that were spoken by her, but that her tongue was improued to express what was never in her mind, which was matter of great affliction to her. Since the abatement of her sorrows she is joined to the church, and therein been a humble walker for many yeares. And since also married to a good man, hath

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borne him severall children, and in her constant way aproved herselfe truely godly to the charity of all observers:—:

"The matter is, That Anno. 1662. This Anne Cole (living in her father's family) was taken with strange fitts, wherein she (or rather the Devill, as 't is judged, making use of her lips) held a discourse for a considerable time. The generall purport of it was to this purpose, that a company of familiars of the evill one, (who were named in the discourse that passed from her) were contriving how to carry on their mischievous designes, against some and especially against her, mentioning sundry ways they would take to that end, As that they would afflict her body, spoile her name, hinder her marriage, &c., . . . And then after some time of unintelligible muttering, the discourse passed into a Dutch tone (a family of Dutch then living in the town) . . . Judicious M^r^ Stone (who is now with God) being by, when the latter discourse passed, declared it in his thoughts impossible that one not familiarly acquainted with the Dutch (which Anne Cole had not at all been) should so exactly imitate the Dutch tone in the pronunciation of English:—Sundry times such kind of discourse was uttered by her, which was very awefull and amazing to the hearers: M^r^ Sam^ll^ Hooker was present the first time, and M^r^ Joseph Haines, who wrote what was said, so did the Relator also, when he came into the house, some time after the discourse began.—Extreamely violent bodily motions she many times had, even to the hazard of her life in the apprehensions of those that saw them: And very often great disturbance was giuen in the publick worship of God by her and two other women who had also strange fitts. Once in speciall, on a day of prayer kept on that account, the motion and noise of the afflicted was so terrible, that a godly person fainted under the appearance of it:—: The consequent was, That one of the persons presented as actiue in the forementioned discourse (A lewd, ignorant, considerably aged woman) being a prisoner upon suspition of witchcraft, the court sent for M^r^ Haines and myselfe to read what we had written; which when Mr Haines had done (the prisoner being present) she forthwith and freely confessed those things to be true, that she (and other persons named

in the discourse) had familiarity with the devill. &c. . . . ANDREW BENTON 1620

"This with the concurrent evidence, brought the woman and her husband to their death as the devill's familiars, and most of the other persons mentioned in the discourse made their escape into another part of the Country. After this execution of some and escape of others, the good woman had abatement of her sorrows, which had continued sundry yeares, and she yet remaines maintaining her integrity, walking therein with much humble comfort, after her so sore and amazing affliction:: The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein.

"Rev^{d} and deare Sir,—I had thoughts of sending the precedent account before now, but I could not (nor yet can) find my papers wherein I wrote what came from Anne Cole in her fitts. However I have gathered up the maine sum, and now send it: if you think fitt to insert the whole or any thing of it, not varying the substance, it is left with you."

A condensed account of this case is given by Increase Mather in his "Essay for the Recording of Illustrious Providences," Ch. 5. Another account is also found in "A Case of Witchcraft in Hartford," by C. J. Hoadley, in the *Connecticut Magazine*, November, 1899.

Andrew Benton was evidently respected and trusted. The following curious provision relating to him is found in the will of Joseph Nash of Hartford, made January 17, 1675. After appointing his brother executor the testator provided: "Also I doe desire & appoynt my Good friends Robert Webster & Andrew Benton to be the overseers of this my will desireing them to be helpfull to my wife & daughter with their counsell as they may have need—as also in devideing the estate & otherwise as there be occasion & appoynt this to be last will &c." (*Prob. Rec. Hartford*, Bk. 4, p. 7.)

It is evident that Andrew Benton was a man strong in body and in mind, tenacious for what he believed to be right, industrious, thrifty, and honest. He began life as a poor emigrant boy in the rugged wilderness of New England. He reared a large family, performed well his duties in town and church, and left his children a moderate but comfortable estate, and the heritage of a good name. He died July 31, 1683, at Hartford,

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leaving no will, and September 4, 1683, an inventory of his estate, amounting to £345 17s. 9d., was taken by James Steele, Sr., and John Merrill.*

The original inventory is now on file in the Probate Court at Hartford, and is as follows:—

¶ *An Inventory of the estate of Andrew Benton Sen^r desesed taken the 4th of September:* 1683*: by us.*

Imp. his Aparill woolin lining hatts &c	003	13	06
on: beed and bedstede withe firnitur belonging to it:	006	10	00
In: 7 pair of sheets and on od sheet	002	07	00
In 7 pilow Coats 18*s* tabel lining 36*s* 6*d*	002	14	06
on Cradel rug and blankett: 5*s* two chests 10*s* 2 ts fether pilows: 5*s*	001	00	00
3 great chairs: 9*s*: on muskett 20*s*: 6: Cushens: 9*s*:	001	04	00
Beeding in the littell rum 30*s*: 30 yards of tow cloth 3*lb*	004	10	00
on sword and 2 pair of bandlers: 5*s*: 3 spining wheels and a reel 9*s*	000	14	00
on wormin pane 3*s* on tube and soop in it 4*s*: too yarn 12	000	19	00
In 9*lb* of twere yarn: 18*s* in 4*lb*½ of Cotten yarne 13*s*: 6:	001	11	06
naills 5*s* on trundel bed and bed stede: 20*s*: 3 chairs: 4*s*:	001	09	00
In bras: 4*lb* two Ioyrn potts 30*s*: on Ioyrn keetel: 5*s*	005	15	00
I pautter: 3 5*s* teene pans 3*s*: erthen ware 6*s*: 6*d*: a our glas 12*d*	002	05	06
wooden ware 6*s*: spoons: 2*s*: on Candelseek 12*d*: two seues 2*s*	000	11	00
on pair of stillyards: 20*s*: two tramells tongs slic and greed Ioyrn 6*s*:	000	16	00
on tabel form: and meel chest 5*s*: 3 old bags: 3*s*	000	08	00

* *The average estate of that period in the Colony as shown by the inventories was about two hundred and fifty pounds.*

books 20*s*: 4 agers: 3 chesels on squar on sheff on hame and pair pinchers 13*s*.	001	13	00	ANDREW BENTON 1620
two narow axes 4*s*: on beetell and 2 weges: 8*s*:	000	08	00	
barells tubs and paills: 28*s* on chees pres: and a bradall 31*s*	001	11	00	
on wooden beetell: 1*s*: on grinding stone 1*s*: 2 pair of shers: 1*s*	000	03	00	
yarn and flax in the chambers: 30*s* on beed: 3 old blanketts on rug and on Coverlett and boulster all: 50*s*	004	00	00	
2 two new hors Colers on Cart roop: on hors halter	000	16	00	
on pair of crosgrners for a dor: 15*d*: on old pilian: and cloth 2*s*: 6*d*.	000	03	09	
Chest and oatts 20*s*: two Corn sives: 18*d* lumber in the chamber 5*s*	000	16	06	
about 90 bushels of mislin and rye about 30 bushels of Indan:	018	05	00	
In chees and meet and sault 3*lb* an a great shovell 18d	003	01	06	
In Cartt and plow and plow Ioyerns and chains all	004	10	00	
Iron friing pans: and a half bushell 3*s* on cuting knif 5.	000	08	00	
In housing and homlott 85*lb* in 16 acers of upland by m[r] Richards great Lotts 112*lb*	197	00	00	
In 8 acers of Land within the fenc in the great swamp:	020	00	00	
In 10: or 12 acers at fower mile hill	004	00	00	
In about twenty Sheep and Lams	008	00	00	
In Swin: 4*lb* in two old marrs 2*lb*	006	00	00	
In two oxen 5 cowes two Calfs 3 yong Cattel: all	037	00	00	
In sith forks hows and other utensells for husbandry &c	001	00	00	
	345	03	09	

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21 pound of Sheeps wool:
28s Iron cro: 000 14 00

JAMES STEELE SEN^{OR} two gunns that were not at home

JOHN MERRILL child^{m} Andrew Samuell and Joseph: the daughters: Marry and doray by his first wif: by his secont wif Ebenesar: 9 or ten yers old Leda about 7 ars old hana 5

The Corne in the barne and on the ground we have not prisd: which as we are informd is about two acers of Sumer wheet: 8 acers of mislin on acer of barly on acer of oats: and 3 acers of Indan Corne

debts due to the estate	6 19 9	
debts due from ye estate	11 3 10	

[On a separate scrap of paper not copied in the records:]

dets due from the estate

^{m} ellieson	Way	04 02 00	
^{m} Phenias	Wilson	02 16 01	
^{m} William	gibbins	00 12 00	
John	ballew	00 03 03	
Jonathan	bull	00 10 06	
^{m} gardner		03 00 00	
		11 03 10	

dets due to the estate

goodman barns of farminton	01 04 00	
John Wiord of Wethersfild	00 15 00	
du frome the estate of ieremyah addoms	01 04 00	
^{m} Cro	00 11 00	
due from the toune	01 10 00	
Richard Smith buther	01 02 00	
du from the estate of gorg Stoking	0 13 09	
	6 19 9	

11 3 10	
6 19 9	
4 4 1	

ANDREW BENTON 1620

At a special court held December 18th, 1683, "The Inventory of Andrew Benton was exhibited in court & the court Grant Administration on the estate to Joseph Benton, & distributed the estate as followeth to the widdow forty pounds of the personall estate to be at her disspos(e) forever & a 3^{d} of the real estate dureing her naturall Life & to Andr(ew) his eldest son besides what he hath received all ready fifty-fower pounds to Samuel Thirty fower pounds to Joseph Thirty fower pounds to Mary Thirty Three pounds to Dorathy Thirty Three pounds to Ebenezer because of his Impotency forty Nine pounds to Lidia Thirty Three pounds to Hannah Thirty Three pounds the sons to have their portion at twenty-one yeares of age the daughters to have their portion at eighteen yeares of age, & If any dy before they be of age his or their portion is to be divided amongst the survivors the Land to be divided amongst the sons part at present the rest in reversion after their mothers decease & Steven Hosmore & John Morrice are appoynted to be overseers to the children and estate & to distribute it to the Legatees, according to this distribution, & If the estate fall short it is to be born by the Legatees proportionally & If their be any adition it is to be divided according to this proportion." (*Probate Rec.*, Bk. 4, p. 77.)

¶ *The Distribution of Good—— Bentons estate*

His wife be cd acording to y^{e} court order was to be	40	00	00
pd her 3 cows & 4 sheep	11	18	00
a bed bedstead & furnitur	6	10	00
an Iron kettle & pan	00	08	00
3 brass kettles & a skylyt	02	19	00
an iron pott & tramell	01	05	00
frying pan & ½ bushell	00	03	00
2 chayrs	00	04	04
cloath yarn & flax	06	08	02
for weaving	00	08	00
sope & tub	00	04	00
wheells reell & sieves	00	11	00
tongues slice & gridiron	00	03	00

ANDREW BENTON 1620	an hour glass & fire pan	00	02	06
	earthen ware	00	05	00
	bellows barrells tubs & payls	00	18	06
	a candle stick table & meat trough	00	06	00
	a bason poringer & spoons	00	06	09
	bookes & wooden bowles	00	10	00
	pillows & blankets	00	13	00
	3 cushens 2 pillow coats	00	11	06
	towells sheets & table cloathes	00	14	00
	a batement for debts	02	10	00
	to be payd By Joseph in corn	02	01	03
		40	00	00
	Andrew Benton cd	54	00	00
	pd him by a cow	03	13	00
	by a third part of y^{e} teem	05	15	06
	by 6 sheep	02	08	00
	a bible	00	05	00
	by an axe augers hamer &c	00	12	00
	sheep sheares & a shovell	00	02	06
	cheeses & salt	00	07	06
	a tub & payll	00	07	06
	by w^{t} was pd to m^{r} way for him	02	03	10
	a hog & 2 pigs	02	03	00
	a how & fork &c	00	06	00
	4 acres of upland	28	00	00
	a bate ment for debts &c	07	08	00
	to pay by Joseph	00	08	02
		54	00	00
	Sam^{ll} Benton cd	34	00	00
	pd him by a gun chayr &c	01	00	00
	a bible cheeses barrells &c	01	00	03
	nayls & a fork	00	07	00
	4 acres of land in y^{e} upland	28	00	00
	his abate ment for debts &c	04	12	10
		35	00	01

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he is to pay 20[d] of y[e] debts.			
Mary Benton cd	33	00	00
pd her by a bed & furniture	01	14	00
by a heifer	03	00	00
pewter & tin ware	00	15	00
a brass kettle & skiner	00	18	00
earthen ware & box iron	00	06	06
a chayr & cushin	00	02	10
table linnen & pillow beers	01	00	09
sheets & towells	01	00	00
10 pd ½ of sheeps wooll	00	14	00
a chest botls & choping knife	00	07	00
5 sheep	02	00	00
a chees pres & cradle	00	03	00
a tramell & beding	00	14	00
a cow & Bull	05	13	00
a gun sword hay cutter &c	01	14	06
a carpitt & bees wax	01	00	00
abatement for debts &c	04	10	07
by a third part of y[e] teem	05	15	06
by an iron crow	00	14	00
by Joseph Benton	01	00	04
	33	00	00
Dorittee Benton cd	33	00	00
pd her by a heifer	02	00	00
by a trundle bed & bed stead	01	00	00
in pewter & wooden ware	01	00	00
a kittle pot & skylit	00	17	00
a chest & a chayr	00	09	10
tabel linnen & pillow biers	01	01	09
sheets & towells	01	00	00
10 yd[s] tow cloath	01	00	00
10 pd ½ sheeps wooll	00	14	00
churn & pillion	00	04	00
a rug botle & cetera	00	17	08

ANDREW BENTON 1620	6 sheep	02 08 00
	a glas & Bed rug	00 12 00
	2 calves & 2 pigs	01 17 00
	a pr stilyards Bettle wedges	00 16 06
	oats & cheeses	00 16 00
	sugar hops oatmell tunell	01 04 02
	abatement for debts &c	04 10 00
	by a third part of y^{e} teem	05 15 06
	by Joseph Benton	04 15 07
		33 00 00
	Ebenezer Benton cd	49 00 00
	pd by 4 acres of land in y^{e} upland by Mr Richards	28 00 00
	by 10 acres ½ land at five mile hill	04 00 00
	by his fathers cloaths	03 11 00
	by 2 pigs & cetera	00 19 00
	by abatement	06 13 10
	by Joseph Benton	05 16 02
		49 00 00
	Lydia Benton cd	33 00 00
	her abatement is	04 10 07
	to be pd by Joseph Benton	28 09 05
		33 00 00
	Hannah Benton cd	33 00 00
	Her proportion of a batement	04 10 07
	to be pd by Joseph Benton	28 09 05
		33 00 00
	Joseph Benton Dt to y^{e} estate for y^{e} house Barn & home lot:	85 00 00
	by his proportion of a batement	04 12 00
	by 4 acres in y^{e} uplands	28 00 00
	by a gun & axe	00 12 00

a bottle & salt	00	03	06	ANDREW
a hog	01	10	00	BENTON
				1620
	119	18	04	
Joseph is cred his share	34	00	00	
by what he payeth t good Benton	02	01	03	
to andrew Benton	00	08	02	
to mary Benton	01	00	04	
to dorrty Benton	04	15	01	
to Ebenezer Benton	05	16	02	
to lydia Benton	28	09	05	
to Hannah Benton	28	09	05	
	104	19	10	
Joseph is to pay in debts	014	19	06	
	119	18	04	

The widdow Benton hath for her thirds in y^e^ homestead as was agreed half y^e^ hous viz: y^e^ south end & y^e^ small room & half y^e^ seller and y^e^ use of y^e^ well & half y^e^ orchard & half y^e^ garden next to it & one quarter of y^e^ Barn & yard room for her cows & for woods it was agreed y^t^ she should have y^e^ use of Ebenezers Land also while he was of age

Distributed By us

STEPHEN HOSMER
JOHN MERRITT

A County Court held at Hartford March 5, 1684/5: "The distribution of the estat of Andrew Benton was exhibited in court & approved." (*Prob. Rec.*, Bk. 4, p. 102.)

Ane (Cole) Benton, widow of Andrew, died April 4, 1686, leaving a will, as follows:—

THE last will of Ane Benton made the twenty sixe day of march one thousand sixe hundred and eighty sixe being in sound mind and perfete memory and not knowing the day of my death doe Cǫmmit my Soule into the hands of my redemer and my body to a Comly buryell I doe dispose of that estate god has betrusted me with as follows I give to my Son

ANDREW BENTON 1620

Ebenezer what of my estate if not hereafter excepted if he lives to nede it y^nd^ my will is that my dafter Lydia shod have my litell brase ketell and my dafter Hanah should have my litell Iron pote and all my wareing aparell except won arporne which I give to my Son Ebenezer. all the rest both linen and wollen shod be devided betwene my dafter Lydia and hanah equeilly and allso my powder to be devided betwene them and my two skillets I give y^m^ I give Lydia 1 fine pillebere and 1 paire of sheats and 1 paire of coten pilleberes and to my dafter Hanah 1 paire sheats and the best of the coten pilleberes also Lydia must be paid the three pounds or what I tooke up in my husbands aparell out of the household stuf and all these legeseys to be paid them the Son at twentyone yeares and the dafters at eightene years of age and if any of them die before thay ataine such age then that part or parts to be to the Survifer and I desire my loving brother Nathaneill Colle to be my executer to this my Last will and testiment and in witness here of I have set to my hand y^e^ yeare and day above writen in presants:

The
of John willson marke × of
mathew grant ANE BENTON"

(*Hartford Probate Records*, Bk. 4, pp. 236, 237.)

An inventory of her estate was taken May 14, 1686, as follows:—

¶ *An Inventory of y^e^ estate off widdow Ane Benton deceased aprill* 19:86 *taken may* 14:86

3 coats & a west coat	02	10	00
an apron & hatt	00	12	00
a coat & west coat	00	05	00
6 handkerchiefs 3 aprons	01	10	00
6 caps & a handkercheif	00	14	00
stockings & apron	00	14	00
shifts & gloves	00	14	06
aprons & handkercheifs	00	07	00
Linnen & silk	00	13	00
	07	19	06

a box & chest	00	14	00	ANDREW
some of her husbands apparrell	01	17	00	BENTON
childrens Blankets	00	12	00	1620
pillow Beers & linnen	01	01	00	
4 p^{r} of sheets	02	10	00	
pillow Beers & table cloth	00	15	06	
towells & Napkings	00	15	00	
4 y^{ds} & ½ cloath	00	14	00	
6 y^{ds} serg	02	08	00	
pins & buttons	00	04	00	
lace & galloom	00	06	00	
linnen cloath	00	10	00	
a silver spoon & bodkin	00	07	00	
powder	00	15	00	
tin & wooden ware	00	10	06	
kettles & pots	03	10	00	
a warming & frying pan	00	10	00	
pot hooks & tongues	00	02	00	
a chest & earthen ware	00	10	00	
tow & wooll	00	13	00	
feathers & sheeps wooll	01	04	00	
cushins & pillows	00	09	06	
cards & candle stick	00	04	00	
6 blankets	02	01	00	
flax & seives wheels	01	00	00	
a chayer & half bushell	00	04	00	
Bibles & bookes	00	15	00	
yarn	00	15	00	
	25	16	06	
a Bed & Bedstead & curtains	03	08	00	
a tub & kneeding trough	00	04	06	
a Table & form	00	03	06	
a churn & tunnell	00	03	00	
tubs & Barrels	00	08	06	
chees moats & Table	00	04	00	
salt & Barks	00	06	00	
mault & flax	00	09	00	

ANDREW BENTON 1620	Behives & Tramell	00	09	00
	pork & Suitt	01	13	00
	cheeses & a cheyer	00	06	00
	coverlids pillows	01	17	00
	a box & pewter	00	15	06
	2 skyllits	00	09	00
	pillow Beers & Napkins	00	06	06
		11	02	06
	2 cowes	08	00	00
	6 sheep & 3 lams	04	00	00
	a sow	00	14	00
	4 hogs	03	00	00
		15	14	00
	Tottall	60	12	06

Taken By us
STEPHEN HOSMER
ICHABOD WELLS

Children of Andrew Benton

JOHN, born at Milford, April 9, 1650, died May 24, 1650.

HANNAH, born at Milford, November 23, 1651, died probably after 1669 and before 1678, at Hartford.

ANDREW, JR., born at Milford, Connecticut, and baptized August 14, 1653, married Martha Spencer, the daughter of Thomas Spencer of Hartford, Connecticut. She was born May 19, 1657, and they were probably married in 1676, as their first child, Hannah, was baptized in the Second Church, January 6, 1677. The church record also shows that on that day Andrew Benton, Jr., "owned ye covenant." He and his wife were admitted to the Second Church December 10, 1694, and he died at Hartford February 5, 1704, leaving an estate which was inventoried at 94 pounds, 3 shillings, and 4 pence, but which proved to be insolvent, and of which his brother Samuel was appointed administrator March 9, 1704.

MARY, born at Milford, Connecticut, April 14, 1655, married Nathaniel Cole of Hartford, October 23, 1685. He was a son of John Cole and a brother of Anne Cole, Andrew Benton's second wife. Nathaniel Cole died April 20, 1708, and Mary then married Jonathan Biglow, who died January 9, 1711, aged sixty-two. March 19, 1713, she married Deacon John Shepard of Hartford. June 3, 1751, "Mary Shepherd, formerly Mary Benton, daughter of Andrew Benton, deceased," quitclaimed her right as a "co-heir" to the estate of Andrew Benton to any land in Hartford on the east side of the great river unto Moses Benton. (*Hartford Records*, Vol. VIII. p. 387.) She died at Hartford, December 23, 1752.

JOHN, born October 7, 1656, at Milford, doubtless died in childhood.

SAMUEL, born at Milford August 15, 1658, died April 10, 1746, at Hartford. A sketch of him will be found at page 41.

ANDREW BENTON 1620

JOSEPH, probably born at Hartford in 1661, married first a daughter of Deacon Paul Peck, Sr., of Hartford. She died January 27, 1680, and was buried in Hartford. He then married Sarah, daughter of Bevil Waters, at Hartford, February 10, 1697. (*Rec. Second Church, Hartford*, p. 238.) He died at Kent, Connecticut, August 12, 1753, at the age of ninety-three.

DOROTHY was probably born in 1663 or 1664, at Hartford. There is no record of her except that she appears by the inventory of her father's estate to have been a child of Andrew's first wife, Hannah, and that she was living at Andrew's death in 1683.

EBENEZER, the only son of Andrew and Anne (Cole) Benton, was born in Hartford and baptized January 4, 1673. He was of feeble mind, and upon the distribution of his father's estate in 1683, when he was nine or ten years old, he was allowed a larger share than the other heirs "because of his impotency." He lived with his mother until her death, when his uncle, Nathaniel Cole, became his guardian. By the will of Nathaniel Cole, made April 17, 1708, he left one third of his movables to his wife, adding, "my said wife to let Ebenezer Benton have a bed out of it." He also made further provision for his ward as follows: "Also my will is that Ebenezer Benton should be maintained by my wife and my son jointly so long as my wife shall remain my widow, but if she should marry that then my son, Nathaniel Cole, shall take care to maintain him during his natural life, if my son Nathaniel Cole shall live to survive him, and that then my said son shall have what estate was given to maintain the said Ebenezer Benton not yet disposed of for his maintenance." The widow of Nathaniel Cole married John Biglow, probably in 1709, and Ebenezer became the ward of Nathaniel Cole, Jr., who evidently did not comply with the will of his father, as the General Court of May, 1718, "empowered Capt. Cyprian Nichols, Dea. Thomas Richards & Sargent James Ensign to sell the lands of Ebenezer Benton for his support and maintenance for the future." (*Pub. Rec. Conn.*, Vol. V. pp. 111, 112.) This committee by their deed, dated February 19, 1719/20, conveyed to Samuel Benton,

Sr., "four acres of upland and ten acres at five mile hill, which was granted to Ebenezer at the distribution of his father's estate," in consideration that he and his heirs, executors, administrators and assigns should care for Ebenezer "under his impotency" and "well support him both in sickness and health" during the rest of his natural life. I have no other record of Ebenezer except the reference to him in the will of his nephew, Jacob, the son of Samuel, who speaks of having some interest in land in Hartford from his uncle Ebenezer, which shows that he died before 1760, the date of that will. ANDREW BENTON 1620

LYDIA, daughter of Andrew and Anne (Cole) Benton, was born in Hartford and baptized February 13, 1675. She was admitted to the Second Church of Hartford, April 26, 1697. I have no further record of her.

HANNAH, daughter of Andrew and Anne (Cole) Benton, was born in Hartford and baptized January 26, 1678. She married Edward Scofell of Haddam, Connecticut, February 20, 1699. He died April 21, 1703, and his widow, Hannah, married Benjamin Smith sometime before May 20, 1706.

JOHN, baptized in the Second Church, Hartford, May 30, 1680, died before July, 1683.

The following records of the Second Church of Hartford show how faithful the descendants of Andrew in Hartford were to the church of which he was one of the founders.

ANDREW BENTON and his wife received December 10, 1694.
JOSEPH BENTON received March 8, 1696.
LYDIA BENTON received April 25, 1697.
SARAI wife to JOSEPH BENTON received March 15, 1712/13.
SAMUEL BENTON, SEN^{R} received September 23, 1716.
DANIEL BENTON, September 21, 1718.
JACOB BENTON, received June 23, 1723.
CALEB BENTON received March 28, 1725.
HANNAH, wife to CALEB BENTON, received February 20, 1725.
MARTHA BENTON, wife of Josiah Clark, received in 1799.
PRUDENCE BENTON, received in 1808.
BETSEY BENTON, received in 1808.
HEPZIBAH BENTON, received in 1821.
JERUSHA BENTON, received in 1831.

ANDREW BENTON 1620

LAVINIA BENTON, received in 1831.
HARRIET BENTON, received in 1838.

¶ *Baptisms*

PHINEHAS, Son to Jacob Benton, January 17, 1730.
ASA, Son to Ebenezer Benton, February 28, 1730/1.
EBENEZER, the son of Andrew Benton, January 4, 1673/4.
LYDIA, the daughter of Andrew Benton, February 13, 1674/5.
— HANNAH, the daughter of Andrew Benton, Junr, who this day owned the covenant, January 6, 1677/8.
HANNAH, the daughter of Andrew Benton, Senr, January 26, 1678/9.
— MARTHA, the daughter of Andrew Benton, Junr, August 1, 1679.
JOHN, the son of And: Benton, Senr, May 30, 1680.
— ANDREW, the son of Andrew Benton, Junr, July 31, 1681.
MERCY, the daughter of Andrew Benton, 7ber 9, 1683.
JOHN, the son of Andrew Benton, February 22, 1684.
HANNAH, the daughter of Sam: Benton, March 19, 1688.
DOROTHY, the daughter of Andrew Benton, Aprill 22, 1688.
EBENEZER (the son of Andrew) BENTON, October 18, 1696.
JACOB (the son of Samll) BENTON, September 26, 1698.
ELIZABETH (the daughter of Andrew) BENTON, February 12, 1698/9.
RUTH (the daughter of Joseph) BENTON, February 12, 1698/9.
MOSES, the son of Samuel Benton, May 3, 1702.
ISAAC ye son of Joseph Benton, February 14, 1703.
LYDIA, daughter to Samll Benton, August 26, 1705.
MEDAD, son to Samuel Benton, junior, Att what time he owned his Covent, Nov: 4, 1705.
JONATHAN, son to Samll Benton, Junir, September 7, 1707.
TIMOTHY, Son to Samuel Benton junir, March 19, 1709/10.
JEHIEL, Son to Joseph Benton, January 28, 1710.
EUNICE, daughter to Samuel Benton, junr, June 22, 1712.
KEZIA, daughter to Joseph Benton, September 19, 1714.
MARY, daughter to Samuel Benton, Junir, May 29, 1715.
SAMUEL, son of Samuel Benton, Junr. August 11, 1717.
SARAI, daughter to Samuel Benton, Junir. August 16, 1719.
ANDREW, Son to Joseph Benton, August 23, 1719.

ANDREW BENTON 1620

HANNAH, daughter to Caleb Benton, July 31, 1720.
MARTHA, daughter to Joseph Benton, November 13, 1720.
EBENEZER, son to Ebenezer Benton. w^n he made publick confession of his sin. April 30, 1721.
CALEB, Son to Caleb Benton, February 4, 1721.
ANNE, daughter to Ebenezer Benton, December 16, 1722.
VIOLET, daughter to Caleb Benton, December 8, 1723.
JOHN, son to Ebenezer Benton, November 15, 1724.
ABRAHAM, son to Caleb Benton, April 11, 1725.
ABIGAIL, Daughter to Jacob Benton, September 19, 1725.
MARY, daughter to Ebenezer Benton, February 26, 1726/7.
JACOB, son to Jacob Benton, January 12, 1728.
SARAH & SUSANNA } Twin children to Caleb Benton, February 23, 1728/9.
SALLY, Daughter of Samuel Benton, April 27, 1794.
MOSES, Son of Samuel Benton, Private, Sick. March 10, 1797.
ANDREW, Son of Samuel Benton, Nov^r 9, 1800.
MARIA BENTON, Adult. Nov. 4, 1821.

¶ *Baptisms in the South Church by Ministers of other Churches.*
GEORGE, Son of Sam^l Benton. September 23, 1792.

¶ *Marriages*

April 24, 1794	Ithamar Colton, Hartford, to MIRIAM BENTON, Hartford.
December 18, 1794	Amos Thompson, Hartford, to EUNICE BENTON, Hartford.
November 8, 1795	Oliver Terry, Hartford, to PRUDENCE BENTON, Hartford.
June 18, 1797	CHAUNCEY BENTON, Hartford, to Betsey Bidwell, Hartford.
September 13, 1798	Erastus Wells, Hartford, to NABBY BENTON, Hartford.
Septem^r 14, 1800	GEORGE BENTON, Hartford, to Mitty Steele, Hartford.
October 8, 1800	Ezra Corning, Hartford, to Wid: HANNAH BENTON, Hartford.
September 22, 1801	Timothy P. Perkins, Hartford, to JERUSHA BENTON, Hartford.

ANDREW BENTON 1620

November 20, 1803 James Benton, Hartford, to Eunice Stanley, Hartford.

October 15, 1804 George Corning, Hartford, to Hannah Benton, Hartford.

September 10, 1807 Rev. Oliver Wetmore, Trenton, N. Y., to Chloe Benton, Hartford.

May 8, 1808 Frederic Lathrop, Hartford, to Martha Benton, Hartford.

April 6, 1814 David North, Berlin, to Sally Benton, Hartford.

June 25, 1815 William Benton, Hartford, to Lydia Burt, Hartford.

September 8, 1816 Roderic Seymour, Hartford, to Emily Benton, Hartford.

May 9, 1820 Daniel Fish, Falmouth, to M. Fanny Benton, Hartford.

¶ *Deaths*

August 10, 1792 William Benton; died at the southward some time since, 26 years.

Decem[r] 28, 1795 Nath[l] S. Benton; cancer, 37 years.

March 10, 1797 An Infant child of Samuel Benton; 10 Days.

April 23, 1803 Samuel Benton; complex, 52 years.

January 26, 1804 An Infant child of Chauncey Benton, 14 Hours.

November 9, 1805 John Benton; paralysis, 81 years.

January 9, 1807 Catherine, Daughter of Nath[l] Benton Dec[d], 12 years.

May 25, 1807 Prudence, wife of Josiah Benton; consumption, 42 years.

February 16, 1810 A child of Reynolds Benton; 1 month.

February 28, 1811 Asa Benton; suddenly, 69 years.

March 20, 1811 Reynolds Benton; consumption, 43 years.

May 24, 1811 Wid: Ruth Benton; old age, 86 years.

ANDREW BENTON 1620

September 30, 1814	EBENEZER BENTON; fever, 32 years.
February 20, 1816	PRUDENCE BENTON; spotted fever, 37 years.
February 15, 1819	Wid: ELIZABETH BENTON; old age, 95 years.
June 5, 1819	Wid: JERUSHA BENTON; complex, 76 years.
July 26, 1820	GEORGE, Son of GEORGE BENTON; fever, 15 years.
May 19, 1823	GEORGE BENTON; peripneumony, 45 years.
August 8, 1823	GEORGE BENTON; insania, 37 years.
May 9, 1824	JANE BENTON; drowned, 30 years.

¶ *Baptisms* 1824–1859

———, 1824	JERUSHA, daughter of Mitta Benton.
July 4, 1824	LAVINIA P., daughter of Mitta Benton.
———, 1824	JULIA, daughter of Mitta Benton.
July, 1830	MARIA WELLS, daughter of Andrew Benton.

Samuel Benton

1658–1746

Samuel Benton

1658–1746

SAMUEL BENTON, son of Andrew Benton and Hannah (Stocking) Benton, was born at Milford, Connecticut, August 15, 1658. His father removed from Milford to Hartford when Samuel was a small child, and he lived all his life in Hartford. He married, probably at New Haven, Sarah, daughter of William and Mary Chatterton of New Haven, where she was born July 19, 1661. (*New Haven Births, Marriages, and Deaths*, Bk. 1, p. 26.) No record of the marriage is to be found, but their first child, Samuel, was born at Hartford, January 28, 1680. December 28, 1682, when Samuel Benton was twenty-four years old, he was "granted a small piece of land to set a house upon, near Jonathan Webster's house." (*Hartford Town Votes*, p. 169.) In the distribution of the estate of his father in 1683, he received:—

"Sam[ll] Benton cd.	34	00	00
pd him by a gun chayr &c	01	00	00
a bible cheeses barrells	01	00	03
nayls & a fork	00	07	00
4 acres of land in y[e] upland	28	00	00
his abatement for debts &c	04	12	10
	35	00	01

he is to pay 20[d] of y[e] debts."

March 11, 1686, he was recorded in Hartford Book of Distributions as owning "One parcell of Land lyeing Neer the road Leading to farmington containing by estimation fower acres be it more or less & abutts on m[r] Richards his Land North on the Highway West on Joseph Bentons land South & on m[r] Willys & m[r] Wells there Land on the east, which was distributed to him as part of fethers estate by those appoynted by the court to doe it.

"One parcell which was given him by his Grand fether Georg Stocking Lyeing near the wolfe pound containing by

SAMUEL BENTON 1658

estimation fower acres & a butts on the highway on the east on Thomas Bunce his Land South on John Stockings Land West & on Joseph Bulls Land North."

He was Surveyor of Highways in Hartford in 1713 and 1714, and in 1715 he was a selectman. (*Hartford Town Votes*, pp. 233, 240.) September 23, 1716, he was admitted to the Second Church of Hartford, as Samuel Benton, Sr. He was a large land-owner in Hartford and in Tolland and Harwinton, and was evidently a prominent and enterprising citizen. He was one of the grantees in a deed by the trustees constituted by the Connecticut Assembly in May, 1715, to the First Proprietors of the Town of Tolland, May 11, 1719. His son, Samuel Benton, Jr., and his brother, Joseph Benton, Sr., and his nephew, Joseph Benton, Jr., were also grantees in this deed. (*Waldo's Early History of Tolland*, pp. 80, 81.) At the Court held March 9, 1703/4, he presented an inventory of the estate of his deceased brother, Andrew Benton, who had died intestate; and was granted letters of administration on said estate provided he gave bonds as the law directs. This he did the 27th day of March, 1704, in the sum of £100, to make his return by March, 1705. (*Prob. Rec.*, Bk. 7, p. 54.) This estate appears to have remained unsettled for about five years. Although Samuel, as administrator, had received in May, 1705, from the General Court, authority to sell Andrew's house and lot (*Pub. Rec. Conn.*, Vol. III. p. 485), he does not appear to have made the transfer till February 5, 1708/9, when the sale was made to Samuel, Jr. (*Land Rec.*, Vol. I. p. 448). He was appointed guardian of John and Mary, children of his brother Andrew, April 12, 1704. (*Id.*, Bk. 7, p. 56.) September 5, 1709, he was appointed guardian of Ebenezer, son of his brother Andrew. (*Id.*, Bk. 7, p. 133.) August 8, 1711, he was allowed £1 19*s.* on account of services in aid of the expedition against Canada. (*Pub. Rec. Conn.*, Vol. IV. p. 263.) February 19, 1720, he was given by the Court the care of his half-brother, Ebenezer, who was "impotent in body and in mind." February 20, 1719, he made a deed to his son, Daniel Benton, as follows:—

KNOW al men by these presents that I Samuel benton Sen^r. of the towne of hartford and colony of Conectecut husbandman for and in consideration of love good wil afections which I have and do have unto my loveing Son daniel benton of the same towne and county batcheldor hav given and granted and by these presents do frely clearly and absolutly give and grant unto the s^d daniel benton his heirs execetors and adminestrators a sertaine tract or parcel of lands lying and being situate in tolland in the county aforesd containeing by estemation forty acres be the same more or les with al other devisions thereunto belonging buted and bounded as followeth east on Joshowah lomes West on a highway south on barnebus hinsdel and north on ephraem hickox which sd tract or parcel of land I have given to him the sd daniel benton his heirs execetors and adminestrators from hence fourth and forever as his proper inheretance absolutly without any maner of condetion in witnes whereof I have heareunto set my hand and seal this twenteth day of feberwary in the fifth yeare of the reigne of our Soveraigne lord george by the grace of god King of england Scotland france and Ireland defender of the faith anno domine one thousand Seven hundred nineteene

SAMUEL BENTON 1658

Signed sealed and delivered
in presence of us
Edward dod
Johnathan hinckley

SAMUEL BENTON SEN^R. *(Seal)*

hartford May 17: 1719 then Samuel benton Sen^r. the granter came before me the under wrighter and acknowledged the foregoing instrument to be his volentary act and deed before me Aaron Cook Justis of the Peace
this foregoing Instrument was recorded by me Joseph benton towne clark

He was one of the original proprietors of Harwinton. This proprietorship is connected with a very curious incident in Connecticut history. When James II. appointed Andros to be president and captain-general over New England, the Connecticut Colony, fearing that ungranted lands, that is, lands not granted to any particular plantation or town, would be seized by the Crown, granted to the Planta-

SAMUEL BENTON 1658

tions of Hartford and Windsor a large tract of land called "Western Lands." Afterwards the Colony assumed to treat these lands as its own, without regard to the grant to Hartford and Windsor, and this brought about a conflict between the Hartford and Windsor claimants, who sought to treat the lands as theirs under the Colonial grant of the officers of the Colonial government. This resulted in a riot and jail-breaking at Hartford. Finally the matter was settled by a division of the lands, the western half to the Colony, and the eastern half to Hartford and Windsor; and May 22, 1729, the Colonial authorities gave a patent of the eastern half, or division as it was called, to Hartford and Windsor. These towns divided this share equally between them, and three townships were made from Hartford's share and three from Windsor's share, leaving a remainder owned jointly by Hartford and Windsor, sufficient for another township, of which each town owned one-half. This remainder was divided into eastern and western portions, the eastern portion being given to Hartford and the western to Windsor proprietors. The two portions were then incorporated, in May, 1732, and May, 1733, as the town of Harwinton, the name being, as it is said, constructed from the first syllables of Hartford and Windsor, with the addition of "ton," meaning town. Hartford appears to have granted its portion to proprietors according to their tax valuation, and Samuel Benton was one of these proprietors. August, 1732, before the incorporation of Harwinton, he gave the following curious conveyance of his share as a proprietor in these lands to his son Jacob:—

TO all Christian people to whom these presents shall come Greeting know y^e^ that I Sam^ll^ Benton of Hartford in the county of Hartford and Colony of Coneticutt in New England for and in consideration of Love Goodwill and affection whitch I have and do Beare to my dutifull and well beloved son Jacob Benton of sd Hartford do fully freely and absolutely Give Grant Convey and confern unto him my sd son Jacob Benton and to his heirs and assigns forever viz:—all my right title interest posesion and property whitch I ever had or that I now have of in or unto any part or ("parst")

SAMUEL BENTON 1658

or parcells of a certain tract of Land Comonly called the Western Land formerly Granted to the townships of Hartford and windsor Lying and being within the aforesaid Colony of Coneticutt and as my said right share and property Doth or may arise and accrue to me more Especially by action of my List of Estate given AD 1720 amounting to the sum of one Hundred and twenty pounds and ten shillings money how ever the same may be Drawn laid out or Divided or buted and Bounded as of my right to have and to hold the above Granted premises to gether with all the previledges and appurtenances to the sam—Belonging or in any wise appertaining unto him the said Jacob Benton his heirs and assigns forever and to his and their only proper use and (behoof) as a good sure and absolute Estate of inheritane in fee simple the same Being free & Clear and freely and Clearly ajusted and Discharged of and (from) all and all maner of former or other Giftes Grants Lases Sales Leases wills Entails joanters Dewvies Judgments Executions or other Incumberances whatsoever and in witnes hereof I the said Sam[ll] Benton have hearunto set my Hand and seal ye Day of august annodomini one thousand seaven Hundred and thirty two

Signed sealed and Delivered
in pr of
Icabod Welles
Elizabeth Wyllys

SAM[LL] BENTON *(and seal)*

August y[e] 11[th] 1756
Recd the aforegoing deed
recerd and hear
have recerded it at Lerge
test Abijah Catling
town Clerk

Hartford ss. September 5[th] 1732
then M[r] Sam[ll] Benton parsonally
appeared and acknowledged the
above writen Instrument by Him
Executed to be His free act and
Deed Before Hez Willys Just
peace

(Harwinton Rec., Bk. 1, p. 418.)

Samuel Benton's house, in which he lived, stood on the east side of the road leading to Farmington, now Washington Street. In the distribution of his father's estate in 1683, he had four acres of land on the east side of this road, and bounded on the north by Mr. Richards' land, on the east by Mr. Wyllys' and Mr. Wells', and on the south by land of

SAMUEL BENTON 1658

his brother Joseph, containing four acres, which Joseph had received from his father's estate. March 30, 1701, Samuel bought of Joseph his four-acre lot. Nathaniel Cole had a four-acre lot next that of Joseph Benton, and this Samuel bought April 28, 1709. February 19, 1720, he acquired the four acres belonging to Ebenezer, thus giving him sixteen acres in his home lot, the title to which remained in him until his death, when he gave it to his son Moses by will. Most of this land is now in the grounds of the "Retreat for the Insane."

In the record of the Session of the General Assembly for May, 1720, is this curious entry with regard to a claim made by Samuel Benton:—

"Upon the petition of Samuel Benton of Hartford, preferred to this Assembly in October last, the town of Hartford by the Worshipful William Pitkin and Major Joseph Talcott, Esq^{rs}, and Joseph King for himself, appeared, pursuant to the order of this Assembly in October, and were heard in their arguments wherefore the charge demanded by the petitioner for the keeping a certain man, who was sometime taken for Nathaniel Wilson, otherwhile for John Clements, should not be cast upon them: Whereupon this Assembly, observing that the overtures of Providence in that case were strange, unheard of and unaccountable, the evidence on both sides unusually strong and peremptory, to that degree that the certain truth is not likely to be gain'd by human testimony, and that final judgments in the law, till reversed, must be accounted among the most infallible human evidence of undoubted truth; and further observing, that the charge demanded did arise for the keeping the said man whilst by judgment of law known by the relations of Nathaniel Wilson, and acquiest in, was declared and pronounced to be Nathaniel Wilson, agreeable to the concurrent opinion of all men hearing thereof: This Assembly do resolve and order, that the accounts of the charge be examined and adjusted by the judge of the probate in Hartford; that what shall be so adjusted and allowed shall be reimbursed and paid out of the estate of Nathaniel Wilson within three months next coming; and that for want of such payment to be made by the heirs

of the said Nathaniel Wilson, it is hereby ordered, that Capt. Aaron Cook, with Mr. Nathaniel Stanly of Hartford, shall pursue the order of this Assembly made on the 12th of May, 1709, wherein full power was granted to Capt. Aaron Cook and Mr. Richard Edwards, to sell so much of the housing and lands belonging to Nathaniel Wilson of Hartford as might be needful for his support, for the payment of the account aforesaid." (*Pub. Rec. Conn.*, Vol. VI. pp. 162, 184.) SAMUEL BENTON 1658

The *Hartford Town Records*, Book I., of Land Records, show the births and the Records of the Second Church, the baptisms of children of Samuel Benton as follows: January 28, 1680, a son, Samuel, born; September 28, 1685, a daughter, Sarah, born; March 14, 1688, a daughter, Hannah, born, and baptized March 19, 1688; December 9, 1691, a daughter, Abigail, born; March 1, 1694, a son, Caleb, born; June 25, 1696, a son, Daniel, born; September 21, 1698, a son, Jacob, born, and baptized September 26, 1698; April 26, 1702, a son, Moses, born, and baptized May 3, 1702; August 26, 1705, a daughter, Lydia, baptized.

The following deed given by Samuel and Sarah Benton in 1721 shows the relation of Samuel to the Chatterton family and is otherwise interesting:—

KNOW all men that we Joshua Hotchkis with Susanna my wife of New Haven in the County of New Haven Sam[ll] Benton with Sarah my wife of Hartford in the County of Hartford and Marcy ffranciss of Wethersfield in sd County of Hartford widdow for Divers weighty Causes and Considerations but more Especially for that tender love and affection that our Brother John Hotchkis of Wallingford in sd county of New Haven has shown to our aged Mother Mary Chatterton whom our said Brother supported for more than four years Last past: Have Remised Released and for Ever quitt clamed and by these presents we the said Sam[ll] Benton Sarah Benton, Marcy ffrancis and Joshua Hotchkis Susanna Hotchkis do fully freely firmly and absolutely Remise Release and for Ever quitt clame unto the sd John Hotchkis in his full quiet and peacable possesion and seizen being one Certain piece or percell of Land Containing three acres Lying and

SAMUEL BENTON 1658

being in Coopers quarter in sd New Haven being Bounded Eastwardly by Land formerly belonging to James Heaton westerly by Theophilus Munsons Land, Northerly by Bradlys Land and Southwardly by John Blacklys Land, To have and to hold all sd percell of land with the appurtennances to the same belonging unto him the sd John Hotchkis his heirs and assigns for Ever; as his and their own proper and absolute Estate of Inheritance in fee simple; and we the above Named Samuel Benton Sarah Benton Marcy ffrancis and Joshua Hotchkis Susanna Hotchkiss do hereby utterly Barr and for Ever Exclude our Selves our heirs Executors and admin^{rs} from all and Every action sute tryall Challeinge and demand for or towards the Recovery of sd percell of Land or any part thereof from the sd John Hotchkis his heirs Executors admin^{rs} or assigns;

In witness where of we have signed sealed and delivered this Instrument this Thirteenth day of May in y^{e} Seventh year of y^{e} Reign of our Sovereign Lord George of Great Brittain King &c Anno Domini 1721.

Signed Sealed & delivered
In presence of us
Tho: Richards
Stephen Brace
Sam^{ll} Benton
Jacob Benton
Caleb Tuttle
Caleb Hotchkiss

these two of Hartford signed and sealed Sam^{ll} Benton and Sarah his wife personally appeared in Hartford this 6th day of December 1722 & acknowledged the within written Instrument to be their free voluntary act and Deed Before me Nathan^{ll} Stanly Jus^{t} Peace

Sam^{LL}: Benton *Seal*
her
Sarah × Benton *Seal*
mark
her
Mercy × ffrances *Seal*
mark

Joshua Hotchkiss *Seal*
her
Susanna × Hotchkis *Seal*
mark

Marcy ffrancis within named personally appeared in Wethersfield the 8th day of December 1722 & acknowledged the within written Instrument to be her free act and Deed Before me Daniel Goodrich Justice of Peace.

The above is a true Record of the originall deed January 30th 1723/4 SAMUEL BENTON 1658

℔ SAMLL BISHOP *Clerk*

(*New Haven Land Records*, Bk. 6, p. 367.)

April 4, 1744, he made his last will, which was allowed at a Probate Court, June 3, 1746, as follows:—

IN the Name of God Amen this fourth Day of April A D. 1744. I Samuel Benton of Hartford In ye Colony of Connecticutt Being Advanced. In years Even to Old Age And Labouring under Bodily Infirmitys though of Sound mind & memory thanks be to God therefor Calling to mind the mortality of my body. knowing yt it is appointed for man once to dye Do make and ordain this my Last will and Testament. that is to Say principally And first of all I Give and Recommend my Soul Into the hands of almighty God yt Gave it And my body I Recommend to the Earth by a Decent and Christian Burial att ye Discretion of my Executors Hereafter named Nothing Doubting but att ye General Resurection I shall Receive ye Same Again by ye mighty power of God. And as touching such worldly Estate wherewith it hath pleased God to bless me with In this Life after my Just Debts and Necessary Expences are paid. I Give and Dispose off ye Same In ye following manner—

Impr. I Give and bequeath unto my. Dearly. beloved Wife Sarah one third part. of my Moveable Estate for Ever. also I Give her one third part of my Real Estate for her Improvement During her natural life—

Item. I Give unto my Son Samuel Benton besides what I have formerly Given to him by Deeds of Gift a Certain peice or parcel of land Containing Eight Acres more or Less Lying In Hartford In ye west Division Commonly So Called Butted north on Land of Jonathan Easton west on Land of Samuel Benton East and South on ye highway and on ye Common to be to him and his Heirs for ever—

Item. I Give to my Son Caleb Benton besides what I for-

SAMUEL BENTON 1658

merly Gave him one Hundred and twenty pounds Money. I paid towards y^e^ purchase of his House Barn and homlott. also I give to my Sd Son Caleb Benton and to his Heirs for Ever forty acres of Land In my Western Right att Harwinton—

Item. My will is that the Land in Tolland I formerly Gave to My Son Daniel Benton by a Deed Shall be In full of all his portion from my Estate—

Item. I Give to my Son Jacob Benton besides what I have formerly Given him all y^e^ Remainder of my Western Right. of Lands In Harwinton to be to him and his Heirs for Ever—

Item. I Give to my Son Moses Benton And to his Heirs for Ever All y^e^ Lands Belonging to me In Hartford (Excepting what I have before Disposed off) with all y^e^ buildings thereon and appurtenances thereto belonging—

Also I give him two Oxen two Horses Cart and plow Harrow Timber Chain plow Chain and all Tackling belonging to y^e^ Same. also I give him a Cow an axe a hoe. and a spade. also I give him a Weavers Loom and Tackling belonging to y^e^ Same.—

Item. I Give to my Daughter Sarah twenty Shillings old Tennor to be paid her by my Executors within three months after my Decease—

Item. I Give to my Daughter Lidia Benton one Feather bed and furniture to it Blankets and Sheets I also Give her one Cow and Six Sheep. also I Give her a room In my house to live In So long as She Shall live unmarried. and My will is y^t^ all y^e^ remainder of my moveable Estate not all ready Givem away be Equally Divided amongst my three Daughters Hannah Abigail and Lidia att Inventory price. And further my will is that if my wife Should Dye before me then the third part of my Moveable Estate I have given to her be Equally Divided to my three Daughters Hannah Abigail and Lidia as aforesaid.—

Item. I do hereby Constitute Appoint and ordain My Son Moses Benton and Lidia Benton to be Sole Executors

of this my Last will and Testament And I do hereby utterly Disalow Revoke and Disanull all and Every other Testament will and Executons. by me In any wise before willed or named. Ratifying and Confirming this and no other to be my Last will and Testament. In wittness whereoff I have hereunto Sett my hand and Seal. the Day. and Year above written— SAMUEL BENTON 1658

Signed Sealed published
& Declared by y^e^ Sd Samuel Benton to be his Last will And Testament. in the presence off— SAMUELL BENTON *(Seal)*

Joseph Buckingham
Tho Richards
Jonathan Ensign
} Witnesses

(Probate Rec., Bk. 15, p. 13.)

When this will was made Samuel Benton had given a considerable portion of his real estate to his sons. His eldest daughter, Sarah, had evidently displeased him, and when we see by the date of her marriage that she was only sixteen years old, we may infer that perhaps she made a runaway match. He gave her only twenty shillings "old tenor," that is, in the bills of credit issued by the Colony, and so depreciated that the twenty shillings were really worth only one shilling. Sarah was thus practically "cut off with a shilling."

His sons, Samuel and Daniel, were then prosperous citizens of Tolland. Jacob was the leading citizen of Harwinton. Caleb was married and living on his own place in Hartford. But Moses, the youngest son, and his sister Lydia were living at home, caring for their aged parents. Samuel probably made them executors of his will for this reason, as it was then usual to make the eldest son executor and quite unusual to make a daughter executrix when there were sons. He also gave the homestead to Moses, and a room in the house to Lydia to live in as long as she remained unmarried. At the time of her father's death she was forty-one years old, and probably never married but continued to live in the room given her until her death.

SAMUEL BENTON 1658

No inventory of Samuel's estate is to be found, but he doubtless left a comfortable estate, as he was an active, enterprising man, with excellent capacity to acquire and manage property. The following is a facsimile of his signature to his last will now on file in the Probate Court.

He died April 10, 1746, at the age of eighty-eight years, and was buried in the cemetery at Hartford, April 11, 1746. This is shown by the entry on that day in the diary of the Rev. Daniel Wadsworth, pastor of the First Church, the entry being under that date: "This day Samuel Benton Interred," but there is not as yet any other record found of the death, and no tombstone marks the spot where he was buried. (*Wadsworth's Diary*, p. 130.)

Children of Samuel Benton

ALL the children of Samuel Benton were born in Hartford.

SAMUEL BENTON, Jr., born January 28, 1680, married Mary Pomeroy, daughter of Medad and Experience (Woodward) Pomeroy, of Northampton, Mass., January 2, 1704, and died at Tolland, Connecticut, February 8, 1763.

SARAH, born September 28, 1685, married Moses Blackley, Jr., of Guilford, January 11, 1702, when she was about sixteen years old. She was living when her father made his will in April, 1744.

HANNAH, born March 14, 1688, married Samuel Kellogg, of Hartford, May 11, 1711. Her husband died before January 18, 1713, as she was admitted to the Second Church of Hartford at that time as "Wid. Hannah Kellogg." She married a second time Joseph Root, of Farmington, Connecticut, October 20, 1716, and had several children. She died at Farmington.

ABIGAIL, born December 9, 1691, owned the covenant in the Second Church, April 12, 1741. She was living in 1744, and is mentioned in her father's will of that date.

CALEB, born March 1, 1694, married Hannah, daughter of Thomas Ensign of Hartford, probably in 1718 or 1719, as their first child, Hannah, was born at Hartford, June 27, 1720, and baptized in the Second Church, June 31, 1720. He was admitted to the Second Church, June 27, 1725, and his wife, Hannah, was admitted to the same church, February 20, 1725. He lived all his life at Hartford on a place towards the purchase of which his father gave him one hundred and twenty pounds, and he died at Hartford, July 25, 1776. Letters of administration on his estate were granted to his wife, Hannah, and his sons, Abraham and Thomas, December 2, 1755. (*Hartford Prob. Rec.*, Bk. 17, p. 87.)

DANIEL, born June 25, 1696, was admitted to the Second

SAMUEL BENTON 1658

Church of Hartford, September 21, 1718. He married Mary Skinner, daughter of John and Rachel (Pratt) Skinner, January 3, 1722. She was born at Hartford, May 28, 1704, and died at Tolland, December 17, 1766. In 1719, his father gave him land in Tolland, Connecticut, and he moved to that town, where he afterwards lived, and died July 25, 1726.

Jacob, born September 21, 1698. A sketch of him follows at page 57.

Moses, born April 26, 1702. A sketch of him is found at page 71.

Lydia, baptized in the Second Church at Hartford, August 26, 1705, was living with her father at the time of his will in 1744, probably unmarried.

Jacob Benton

1698–1761

Jacob Benton

1698–1761

JACOB BENTON, the third son of Samuel Benton and Sarah (Chatterton) Benton, was born at Hartford, September 21, 1698, and baptized in the Second Church, September 26, 1698. His father was a large land-owner in Hartford and elsewhere, one of the selectmen, and one of the leading citizens of Hartford, and Jacob appears to have received more than the usual education of boys at that time.

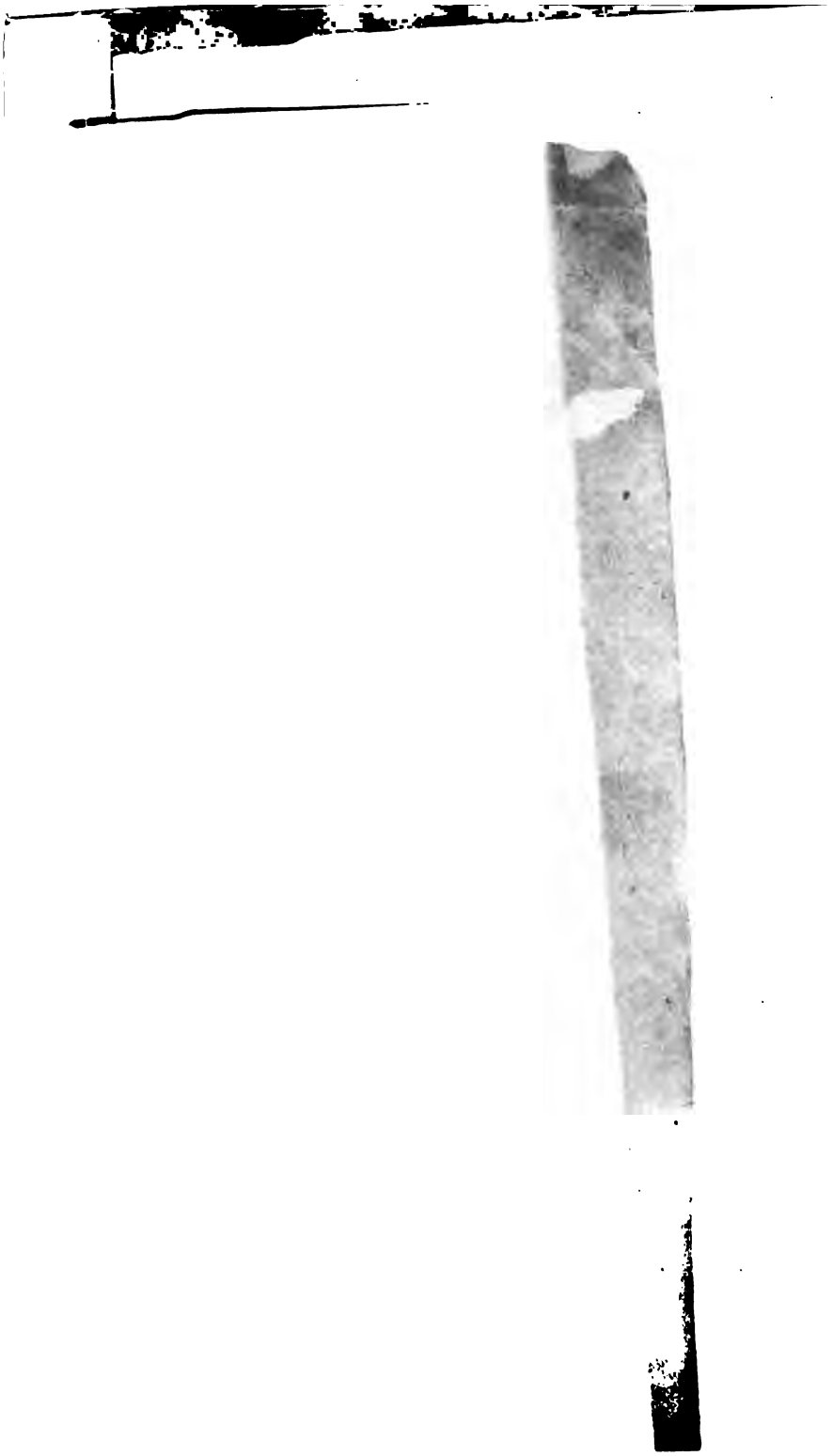
April 3, 1723, he bought of his brother Samuel, who had removed to Tolland, the place on which Samuel had lived in Hartford, containing eight acres of land with house and other buildings thereon for one hundred and thirty pounds. This eight acres was the original home lot of Andrew Benton, Jr., and was purchased by Samuel Benton, Jr., February 5, 1708, after the death of Andrew. It was on the east side of what is now Washington Street, north of its junction with Webster Street, and south of the homestead of Jacob's father, Samuel Benton. A portion of it is now included in the grounds of the "Retreat for the Insane." July 6, 1724, Jacob married Abigail Carter, the daughter of Joshua and Martha (Skinner) Carter, of Hartford. She was a member of the First Church, admitted to full communion April 28, 1717, and the marriage was in that church. (*Hist. Catalogue, First Ch., Hartford*, p. 243.) They went to live on the place he had bought of his brother Samuel, and he resided there until 1736 or 1737. Abigail, the daughter of his first wife, and his sons, Jacob, Phineas, Amos, and Barnabas, children of his second wife, were all born in this house. March 10, 1741, Jacob sold this place to Deacon Joseph Holtom, of Hartford, for a consideration named in the deed of four hundred and eighty pounds. (*Hartford Rec.*, Bk. 6, p. 411.) About the year 1800 the house was moved across the street farther to the north, and it now stands on the west side of Washington Street. It does not

JACOB BENTON 1698

appear to have been changed, and the accompanying picture doubtless shows it substantially as it was when Jacob Benton lived in it. September 20, 1725, his wife Abigail died in this house, and April 4, 1728, he married, in the First Church, Elizabeth Hinsdell, daughter of Barnabas and Martha (Smith) Hinsdell of Hartford, where she was born January 9, 1703.

December 11, 1729, he was chosen surveyor of highways for the "South Side" in Hartford, and December 12, 1732, he was chosen grand juror. (*Hartford Town Votes*, Vol. II. pp. 69, 78.) His father was one of the original proprietors of Harwinton, a town about twenty miles from Hartford, and in August, 1732, he conveyed a portion of his right in this grant to his son Jacob, in consideration of the "love, goodwill, and affection" which he bore to his son. In May, 1736, Jacob with others petitioned the General Court for "authority to embody in Church estate and be incorporated as a town by the name of Harwinton," but authority apparently was not given, for October 4, 1737, another memorial for the same purpose was presented to the General Court, which stated that the population of Harwinton was then one hundred and sixty-one, of whom twenty-four were heads of families. Jacob Benton signed this memorial as "Senior Deacon," showing that the Harwinton Church had then been organized. Harwinton was incorporated as a town in October, 1737. The Act of incorporation recited the petition of the "Inhabitants of the Plantation called Harwinton" &c., and "Resolved that said Plantation be a Town Jncorporate Known by the name of Harwinton and Vested with Town Priviledges as Other Towns in this Colony Established by Law are, and that a Tax of two pence pr. Acre shall be Assesed & Levyed upon all the Lands within the Bounds of said Town Annually for the Space of four years, next after the Session of the Gen^{l} Assembly in May next in Lieu of any former Grant or Tax, and that the Collectors for the Time being in said Town shall annually Collect said Tax, who are hereby Authorized and Jmpowred to Collect the same as Other Collectors of town Rates by Law are & having Collected the same, said Collectors are to deliver the same to such Committee or Committees from Time to Time

Jacob Benton House, Hartford
1715



as said Town shall make Choice of for that purpose, and to be by them Applyed and Jmproved, for the Support of the Gospell Ministry and Building a Meeting House in said Town, and it is further Resolved that said Jnhabitants have Liberty to Jmbody themselves into Church Estate and Settle an Orthodox Minister of the Gospell in said Town with the Advice and Consent of the Neighbouring Churches, and it is further by this Assembly Resolved that the Letter A shall be the brand for Horses in the Town of Harwinton." (*History of Harwinton*, p. 105.) JACOB BENTON 1698

The first town meeting was held at Jacob Benton's house in Harwinton, December 20, 1737. He was then chosen town clerk, chairman of the board of listers and rate-makers, and town treasurer, and was also made a committee to receive and dispose of the land-tax money that the General Court might order. He was town clerk from 1737 until 1741. The original records kept by him are still in existence in good condition, and the accompanying is a facsimile of the first page. It is interesting to his descendants not only as being an accurate record by him of his family at that time, but as showing that he was a good penman for the times. Few town records of that date are as clear and accurate as those kept by him. The first earmark recorded in Harwinton was "December 20, 1737, Jacob Bentens ear mark for his Creatures is a Cross on the near ear."* He was clerk of the Proprietors of East Harwinton from 1736, and was selectman of Harwinton in 1742, 1743, 1744, 1748, 1749, 1754, 1755, 1758. In 1758 he was a Deputy from Harwinton to the General Assembly. He was also sealer of weights and measures for several years, and held other minor offices at various times. It is apparent from the records that he was the most active and prominent citizen of the town for many years, both in town and church affairs.

April 21, 1738, at a town meeting held at his house he was put on "A Commeete to treet with Mr. Andrew Bartholomew in order to asettelment in the work of the Menesterry A mongst us and to Lay the Propossels y^t^ Allready haue been Proposed before him and to bring his Answer if any bemad to the next meeting for a further Confirmation.

* *The letter o was then often written as we now write the letter e.*

JACOB BENTON 1698

And it is farther uoted that the said Commeete or any tow of them Shall make ther A Plication to the next Association for there advice in order to the Settelment of a minister amongst us." (*Harwinton Records*, Bk. 1; *History of Harwinton*, p. 58.) At a meeting of the Proprietors of East Harwinton, he was also put on a committee to lay out the land to be given to the ordained minister. (*Ibid.*, p. 60.)

He was quite active in school matters, as appears by the following town votes:—

"20 Jan., 1741/2. Uoted : that : wee will : haue schooling sum part of the year. Uoted that theire be three : pence upon the pound leued upon the Grand List in order to Maintain a School in the town. Uoted that Jacob Benten and Jonathan Hopkins and Nathan Davis Be a Commity in order to prouide a Sofisiant School master and mistress for the year insuing in the town. Uoted that the School for the Jnstructing the youth to Right and Read for two months this year Be att the Dweling House of Jsarael Merimon. Uoted that the Rest of the Mony Be left to the Discresion of the Commity to Lay out upon School Dames——9 June 1743. Voted that any parson or parsons Joyning to gether to Build a School house in the town of Harwinton shall have Liberty to Build a Schoolhouse Sumwhere Neer the Meeting Hous upon there one cost. Uoted that Jsrael Merrimon and Daniel Bartholomew Be a Commity to Determin the place whare the Schhol House Shall Stand. 13 Jan., 1745/6. Voted that there Shold be a School house built in Sum Cenvenient place near the meeting house in Said Town. 17 Feb., 1745/6. it is now Voted that y^e^ above Said School house Shold butt Sumwhar neare y^e^ SouthEast corner of y^e^ R^d^: M^r^: Andrew Bartholomew y^t^ Lyeth West of y^e^ meeting house or near there as y^e^ Comiitis descresion Shall Lad them. Voted that y^e^ above menshoned School house Shall be Eighteen feet in length & Sixteen feet in Wedth one Story high. Voted that De:^n^ Jacob Benton & Daniel Bartholomew & Jonathan Butler Shall be a Commity to order & See to y^e^ building & finishing of y^e^ above Said Schoolhouse. Voted that all y^e^ boards & Timber & Stone that was Left in finishing of y^e^ Loar part of y^e^ meeting house Shall be made Use of So fare as it will Go for the beni-

fit of the above Said School house in any Use as sd Commity Shall See fit about sd house. 15 Dec., 1747. this meeting (begun at the Meeting-House,) is aiorned to the School house in y^e^ above Said town this meeting being opned at said School house they proseded uiz—Uoted that Amaziah Ashman Shall be a town Inhabitant in this Town. Uoted that there Shall be a Rate Leued on poles and Ratabel Estats in this town of Seventy pounds money of the old tener to Defray the Charge of Building the Schoolhouse in this town in this year. Uoted that there Shell Be Twenty pounds in money of the old tenor Leued on poles and Ratabele Estats in this town in order to maintaining of a Schoole a mongst in this town in the year Insuing. Uoted that D^e^ Jacob Benton & daniel Bartholomew & Samuel Phelps Shall be a Commitus to Recceve and pay out the above Said money for Schooling as there Disscreshon Shall Lead them for the Best advantage for Educating yuth amonst us in this town for the year Jnsuing. 13 Dec., 1748. Uoted that there Shall be Eighty pounds in money of the old tenon Leved on pols and Ratabel Estats in this town in order to Cary (on) Schooling in this town the one half of it is to be improued to hire a School master as fare as it Shall Go in this town for the year insuing and the other half is to be improued to hire School danes in this town for y^e^ year Insuing. Uoted that d^e^ Jacob Benton and Samuel Phelps and Daniel Bartholomew and Daniel Phelps and Capt Daniel Messenger Shall be a Committee to order and a point a School master and School mistrises in this town in the year insuing and to Receive in and pay out the above Sum of money for the use aforesaid according to there Discresion for the Larning of the youth a mongst us to w(r)ight and Reade. 3 Dec., 1750. Voted that there be Sixty pounds leved for the hiring a School master to teach Children to Read & write Cypher the one half to be Raised by the town and the other half to be by the parents or masters of the Children that they Send to Said School. JACOB BENTON 1698

"Voted that there Shall be Forty pounds Raysd for the hiring of two women to teach Children to Read the Schools to be kept the one East Side of the town at Such Place as the Committee that Shall be Chosen Shall a point; to be Raised

JACOB BENTON 1698

one half by the town the other half by the parents and masters of the Children that they send according to the number they send

"Voted that Ebenezer Hopkins Isaac Bull and Abijah Catling Shall be a Committee to order the prudentals of the Schools in hiring a School master and School mistrises and disposing the money that was Voted for School according to the true intent for what it was Granted. 3 Dec., 1751. Voted that there Shall be one hundred pounds in money of the old tenor Raised in this Town for Schooling of Children in order to teach them to writ and Read the one half of s[d] money to be Raised on the Ratetabel Estate of the inhabitants and the other half to be——— Raised upon the poles of Such Children as Shall be Sent (to) School the above money to be divided upon the List on Each Side of the town and Improved as the Committee that Shall Be Chosen Shall order the same in one Shool or more and to apoint the places to keep the Schools and git school masters for y[e] same Voted that Ebenezer Hopkins and Abijah Catling and Lt Aaron Cook and Israel Merriman and David Hayden and decon Daniel Phelps Shall be a Comm(ittee) to apoint the Places for the Schools and dispose of the School money for the Use for which it is voted for.

"20 Dec., 1752. Voted that we will have a School in this town for the year Insuing to wit one month on the East Side of the town and one month at the School house in this town & one month on the West Side the Town Voted that their Shall be £60 00*s* : 00*d* in money of the old tenor Leived on the one half of it Leived on the Ratable Estate in this Town and the other half of the s[d] money to be Leived on the poles of Such as Go to School in order to maintain a school among us Voted that Cyprian Webster & Samuel Phelps & De[a] Jacob Benton Shall be a Commetee to apoint places for Said School and to hire a School master for said School. 18 Sept., 1753. Voted that their Shall be Seventy Pounds money Levied on the poles & Ratable Estates of the Inhabitants of this Town to Defray the Charges of the meeting house and of the Schooling that we have had Done allready in this Town this year & pay for a Cloth to Cover the Ded that is all-

ready provided in this town" (*Hist. of Harwinton*, pp. 42, 43, 44, 45.) JACOB BENTON 1698

"20 March, 1753. voted that the proprietors will dispose of the undevided Land the interest of S[d] money to Support a School in the west propriety of Harwinton." (From Records of "the west propriators of harwinton," *Ibid.*, p. 45.)

All the town meetings were held at Jacob Benton's house until January, 1741, after which they appear to have been held at the meeting-house.

Before pews were made in the body of the meeting-house the men sat on the right side of the house and the women on the left side, and the town assigned the seats by vote. February 17, 1746, the town voted that Jacob Benten (Benton) and others named should "Sit in y[e] pew under y[e] Stares at the west end of the meeting house," &c. In December, 1752, the town voted to raise fifty pounds in money, old tenor, to be "Leved on the Ratable Estate in this Town to defray the Charg of Building of the Pews in the Body of the meeting house." Jacob Benton was made chairman of a "Commetee to Look after and See that the Pews be made in the body of the meeting house and to draw the said 50 pounds in money and dispose of it to the workmen that doe the work." Also chairman of a committee "to be Seeters of the meetinghouse after the pews are made in the Loer part of the Meeting House."

Jacob Benton and Elizabeth Hinsdell Benton had five children:—Jacob, born January 8, 1728/9 at Hartford; Phinehas, born January 10, 1731/2 at Hartford; Amos, born November 10, 1732, at Hartford; Barnabas, born January 3, 1733/4 at Hartford; and Elizabeth, born June 17, 1738, at Harwinton.

Jacob Benton died November 23, 1761, at Harwinton. The entry in the Town Records is "Deacon Jacob Benton of Harwinton Died the 23rd day of November, 1761, in the sixty-second year of his age." He was buried in the "Old Cemetery" at Harwinton, though no stone now stands to mark the spot. He appears by the Town Records to have been a considerable land-owner in Harwinton, and although there is no inventory of his estate from which its amount can be ascertained, I think he left more than an average estate

JACOB BENTON 1698

for the times. He made his last will December 11, 1760, as follows:—

IN the Name of God amen: y^e 11^th Day of June A^o Dom^o: 1760. I Jacob Benton of Harwinton In the County of Litchfield & Colony of Connecticutt in New-England, being at this present time Under Somewhat of Indisposition of Body: Nevertheless through y^e goodness of God Enjoying Soundness of Mind & Memory: & Calling to mind my own mortality & y^t it is appointed unto man to die, I Do therefore make & ordain this my last will & Testament, hereby, Revoking & Disannulling all former or other wills, Testaments or Executors by me Made—

And first of all I Recommend my Soul into the hands of God my faithfull Creator: hoping for the forgiveness of all my Sins, through the Merits, Righteousness & Mediation of Jesus Christ my Saviour & Redeemer: I Recommend my Body to y^e Earth to a Decent Buriall according to the Discretion of my Executors hereafter Named: & as touching Such worldly Estate or Goods as God hath pleased to bless me with in this Life, I Give Demise & Dispose of the Same in Manner following—

First I Do Give to my Eldest Son Jacob Benton, my Sixth or Last Division of Land in Harwinton, which Consists of Two Parts or Lottments, the one Containing twenty two acres & one Perch, the other five acres as may be Seen in the Survey Bill on Record having heretofore given him part of his portion; & in particular a featherbed with the furniture there-off which he hath now in possession—

I Do also Give him my Meadow lott which Lieth west of Cyprian Websters Esq^r being on the other Side of the highway from his house: & Contains about thirty three acres and an Half, be the Same more or less. I also give him my Great Bible.

I Do also give to (my Grand child) Phinehas (y^e Son of my Son Jacob) one yoke of oxen: or the Value of a good yoke of oxen out of my Moveable Estate; in Case he arrives to y^e age of 21 years; otherwise, I give y^e above Specifyed to my Son Jacob:—

I Give also to my Grandchild, Elizabeth; viz: my Son Jacob's Daughter, my best bed with all the furniture thereoff; & my big Chest with Drawers & the Box that Usually Standeth thereon, & also my Great table, & my Great black Chair & three of y^e^ Small black Chairs; my best looking glass & Two platters & two plates, all which things here mentioned If She Should not live to possess or dispose off; or have heirs to possess & Inherit y^m^ my will is that they Should be my Son Jacob's & his Heirs for ever— JACOB BENTON 1698

Secondly: I Give to my Son Amos Benton the one half of the Lott on which his Dwelling house Now Stands, having Already Given him the other half by Deed of Gift, the whole Lott Containing about 57 acres; I give him also my Lott which Lyeth & is Bounded Upon y^e^ Highway North of his dwelling house; S^d^ lott lying on the North Side of S^d^ Highway, & Contains about 50 acres; I give him also my weaving loom & y^e^ tackling or furniture which belongs thereto, which he hath Now in possession.—

Thirdly I give to my Son Barnabas Benton, my Homelott or Homestead, with the Buildings thereon; the lott being about 64 acres. I Give him also my Lott that is North & in the Same teer with my Homelott, being a lott that I Bought of Dan.^ll^ Hinsdell & Contains Fifty Six acres; & is Bounded North on land belonging to Jonathan Butlers Heirs, & South on Land Now belonging to Janna Griswould:—

I Give him also my great Kettle & my Great Pot, & the Remainder of my Chairs: which I have not already disposed off, also my Gun & my Small looking Glass & my Dish Kettle.

Fourthly: I Give my Daughter Abigail one Cow; & also So much out of my Moveable Estate as with the Cow Shall Make Seven Pounds taking y^e^ Cow & S^d^ Moveables as they Shall be prizd by the Executors of this my will; I give her also an Equal part with my children y^t^ is to a Say a fourth part of my Books (the great Bible excepted) being already disposed off: which with what She hath already had is to be Understood as her whole Portion—

And Now having Some Rights of land not as yet men-

JACOB BENTON 1698

tioned, viz: In New Haven, which fell to me by my Honoured Mother, Sarah Benton & in Hartford by my Uncle Ebenezer Benton—& also in Harwinton In all undivided Lands: & if there Should be any belonging to me otherwhere Not here mentioned: my will is y^{t} all & every S^{d} Rights Should be Equally Divided between my Sons Jacob, Amos & Barnabas.

Moreover as there Remains yet Some Moveable Estate not disposed off I Do give in the first place to my Son Jacob one Cow & Six Sheep or y^{e} worth & value of them out of my Moveable Estate.

& in the Next place I give to my Son Amos one bed which I Call & is to be Understood as y^{e} meanest bed or least worth with its furniture

& my other bed Not yet disposed off I give to my Son Barnabas, with the furniture thereoff—

& Now as to the Remainder of my Moveable Estate Not as yet disposed off My will is, that after my Just Debts & funerall Charges are paid; that it Should be Equally Divided between my Sons Jacob, Amos & Barnabas—

Moreover I Do Constitute & ordain my three Sons: viz: Jacob, Amos & Barnabas Executors of this my Last Will & Testament hereby Revoking all former & other wills & Testaments

& Pronounce & Declare this to be my Last will & Testament

Made & Dated In Harwinton this 11th Day of June—
A^{o}: D^{o}: one Thousand Seven Hundred & Sixty—

Signd Seald pronounced & Declard
to be the Last will & Testament
of Jacob Benton In presence off—
Abj^{a} Cutting — Jacob Benton *(Seal)*
Andrew Bartholomew
Joseph Cook

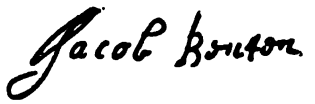
November the 30 day 1761 then personally appeared Abijah Cutting & Andrew Bartholomew and Joseph Cook the witnesses of y^{e} aforegoing will and made oath that the above named Jacob Benton Signed Sealed and declared the Same

to Be his Last will and testament in our presence and that he was in his perfict mind and memory this before me

JACOB BENTON 1698

and we the above witnesses Signed in the presences of each other. CYPRIAN WEBSTER Justice of peace

This will was allowed by the Probate Court, at Litchfield, where it is now on file, November 30, 1761, but no inventory of the estate is to be found. The following is a facsimile of his signature to the will.



Deacon Jacob Benton was evidently a devout Christian, a public-spirited citizen, and an excellent husband and father, a good man of whom his descendants may well be proud.

Moses Benton

1702–1755

¶

I HAVE been much aided in the preparation of the foregoing sketches of Andrew, Samuel, and Jacob Benton by Mr. Charles Towneley Martin of Hartford, who has not only freely given me information which he had gathered, but has personally examined all the original records referred to therein. Mr. Martin is descended on his mother's side from Moses Benton, a grandson of Andrew, and a brother of Jacob Benton. His mother was a daughter of Martha Benton, a daughter of Samuel, the son of Moses Benton. I therefore print the following sketches of Moses and Samuel Benton, and of Martha, the daughter of Samuel, from information given by Mr. Martin, to show my appreciation of his assistance, although they are no part of my original plan to publish information only as to Samuel Slade's direct line of descent from Andrew Benton.

Moses Benton

1702–1755

MOSES BENTON, born at Hartford April 26, 1702, and baptized May 3, 1702, in the Second Church, was the youngest son of Samuel Benton, Sr., of Hartford. He lived with his father on the home place, about a mile and a quarter from the First Church, until his father's death in 1746, when the place was given to him by his father's will. He appears to have taken some part in town affairs, as he was chosen fence-viewer for the South side December 11, 1729, and was chosen collector of the Town rate December 18, 1733. He was a member of the Grand Jury in 1739 and one of the haywards in 1744. He was married to Merriam about 1740 or 1741, as their oldest child died November 12, 1815, at the age of seventy-three years. The most diligent search, however, does not discover any record of this marriage, nor is the surname of Moses' wife yet known. Moses Benton died at Hartford May 11, 1755, and was there buried May 12, 1755.

The inventory of his personal estate made October 3, 1755, amounted to £74 15*s.* 6*d.* Among other articles it included "Two bibles, a testament, Book of Mr. Whitfields, Wats hyms, Select hyms and Mr. Sheperds sound believer." No distribution of his real estate was made until June 30, 1773, when it was divided by an instrument executed by his widow and his children, Moses, Samuel, Martha, wife of Josiah Clark, Merriam, Jr., and Lydia Benton. The records of the Second Church of Hartford, where Moses would naturally have been a member, are lost between 1731 and 1790, and it is not known whether he was a member of the church, though the books contained in his inventory would indicate that he was. His father doubtless gave him the home estate and all his lands in Hartford because he had taken care of his parents in their old age. His wife, Merriam, appears to have been a woman of character and ability. When her husband died in 1755,

MOSES BENTON 1702

she was left with the care of a family of small children, the youngest, Lydia, probably less than a year old. She evidently managed all the estate left by her husband, including that given to his children as well as that given to her, until the division of the real estate in 1773. She does not appear to have disposed of any of the property, but to have kept the estate entire. She died September 30, 1776, and was buried October 1, 1776, at Hartford, the sexton's record being: "Mother of Samuel Benton, 1 Oct. 1776, age 61 years." The following notice of her death in the *Connecticut Courant*, No. 611, October 7, 1776, shows the estimation in which she was held in Hartford: "Died at this place on Monday last, Mrs. Merriam Benton, widow of the late Mr. Moses Benton, in the sixtieth year of her age, justly lamented by her numerous children and acquaintances, was a person of a blameless character, of a kind and friendly temper and disposition to all especially to the sick and distressed."

The will of Moses Benton, executed May 8, 1755, only three days before his death, is now on file in the Probate Court at Hartford, where it was approved August 5, 1755. It is in the handwriting of Pelatiah Mills and is as follows:—

> IN The Name of God Amen I Moses Benton of Hartford in Hartford Countey beinge Weeke & Low in Boodely Helth but of Sound minde & Memery for which I Desire to Bles God I Rrememberinge y^t^ it is appointed for all men once to Dye I Doe Hearby make & ordain this my Laste will and and Testemente in maner & forme as followeth—
>
> First & Princapely I Recomend my Sole to God that Gave it Hopinge therow y^e^ Merits of a Glorus Jeseus to Receve y^e^ same att y^e^ Reserection of y^e^ Juste—and as touching y^e^ worldly estate & Good things with which it Hath Plesed God to bles me After y^e^ Payments of all my Dets & funerall charges I Dispose of in Maner following—
>
> First I Give to my Well beloved Wiffe Merriam the use & Improvment of one Half of my Dewelinge House & the uese & Improvment of five acres of Land adjoyninge on y^e^ South Side of my House Loot

& to Extend Easte till s^d five acres be meseuered of & y^e Same to use & Improve as Longe as She Shall Remain my Widow and also one third of my Loot att West divition and also full & free Libertey to Git Her fier wood of of y^e Land that is Laid oute in y^e Late Divition of Hartford Comons and also one third Parte of my medow Land. begininge att Easte End & on y^e North Side of my Land tackinge one third parte of y^e Same all to be used & Disposed by Her Duringe Her Remaininge my Widow— MOSES BENTON 1702

and furthermore I Give & Bequeth to my s^d Wiffe the one third Parte of all my movable Goods and Stock of what Nature or kinde Soever to be Her own for ever—

Item. I Give to my three Dafters Martha & Mirriam and Lidiah one acre & Half of Land Each of them to Have oute of my Medow Lott and all y^e Remainder of my movable Estate to be thirs for ever & Equaly Divided amongste them & further my will is y^t y^e Rentes and Improvments of my Sons Land for y^e term of tow years be Equeley Divided amongst my s^d three Dafters as also all my Land in s^d Hartford on y^e Easte Side of Connecticut River—

And furthermore I Give & Bequethe to my two Sons Moses & Samuell all y^e Reste of my Estate in Housings Lands wher soe Ever y^e Same Shall be to be Equely Divided betwen them and I Hearby macke & appoint Joseph Holtom of s^d Hartford & my Beloved wiffe Merriam to be the Executors of this my Will & Testement Hearby Declaringe & Pronouncinge this and this ondly to be my Laste will & testemente Hearby Revokinge all other & former Wills by me Heartofore made In Confirmation wherof I Have Hearunto Set to my Hand & Seall this 8^th of May 1755:

Pronounced Published and
Declared to be His Laste Moses Benton *(Seal)*
Will & Testement in
Presents of us as Witnises
Caleb benton William Powill Pel^d Mills

Children of Moses and Merriam Benton

MARTHA, the oldest child, married Josiah Clark of Hartford, the intention of marriage being published in the church at West Hartford, July 4, 1762. Their daughter, Eunice Clark, died July 1, 1774, aged ten years, as appears by the gravestone in the First Church graveyard at Hartford.

MOSES, the second child, was born in 1744. Little has been ascertained with regard to him. After the death of his father when he was fifteen years old, June 14, 1762, he made choice of Joseph Bunce as his guardian. (*Prob. Rec.*, Bk. 19, p. 9.) At the distribution of his father's estate in 1773, he appears to have been living at home with his mother, and he made a conveyance of land in Hartford, June 12, 1783. His niece, Mrs. Martha Lathrop, who was living in 1878, said that he was never married.

SAMUEL, the third child, was baptized June 18, 1749, in the First Church, and died April 23, 1803, as appears by the record of the Second Church. A sketch of him and his family follows.

MERRIAM, the fourth child, was born in 1754, and married Rev. Ithamar Colton April 24, 1794, as appears by the records of the Second Church. They soon moved to Granby, Connecticut. She died July 28, 1840, at the age of eighty-six years, as shown by her gravestone in the South graveyard at Hartford.

LYDIA, the youngest child, married John Nevens of Hartford, and she was living in 1773, at the time of the distribution of her father's estate, but the date of her birth, of her marriage, and of her death are not known.

Samuel, the son of Moses and Merriam Benton, was baptized in the First Church at Hartford, June 18, 1749. November 22, 1772, he married Prudence, the daughter of Zebulon and Keziah (Bull) Seymour, of Hartford, where

she was born April 3, 1755. By this marriage he became connected with one of the most influential families of the Second Church. There is no information to be had of his early life and education, but he was, like his father, a husbandman. After his father's death he and his brother Moses occupied the homestead which their father Moses inherited from his father Samuel, Moses occupying the south half, and Samuel with his mother the north half of the house. December 11, 1776, he was chosen tythingman, doubtless for the Second Church, which shows that he must have been a church member. (*Town Votes*, Vol. II. p. 257.) June 17, 1774, he mortgaged the seven acres of land and the north half of the house, which he had inherited from his father, Moses, to Thomas Seymour, a cousin of his wife, to secure a debt of sixty pounds. July 1, 1773, the day after he received his portion in the distribution of his father's estate, he appears to have begun to dispose of his lands. This might have been required by the hard times of the Revolution, or he might not have inherited the good business qualities of his grandfather, Samuel, for whom he was named. However this may be he continued to dispose of his lands until June 3, 1783, when he with his brother Moses gave a deed of their home lot to Thomas Seymour. By this conveyance the last of the upland owned by Andrew Benton passed out of the Benton family. Samuel, however, remained in the house as a tenant of Seymour until 1790, when he removed to Cooper Lane, now Lafayette Street, where he lived until his death, April 23, 1803. His wife Prudence survived him, and died September 1, 1831. He was a member of the Governor's Guard and thus exempt from service in the regular training band, but he volunteered and served in the war of the Revolution about eighteen months, and at some time during the war he had charge of a provision train, but no official record of his service is yet found. Samuel left his widow the care of a family of little children. To support herself and them she established a private school, such as was known a century ago as a "Dame School." "Miss Benton," as she was called, took small boys as well as girls into her school. She was a woman of remarkable energy, and her school is said to have been a good one for that time. She

MOSES BENTON 1702

MOSES BENTON 1702

was an enthusiastic instructor, and kept a plentiful supply of willows at her desk. "Miss Benton" was succeeded in the school by Miss Thatcher, and later by Prudence Benton Lathrop, granddaughter of the founder. It was given up about 1850.

Samuel and Prudence Benton had the following children:—

Ursula, born August 24, 1773; died November 13, 1773.

Samuel, born August 20, 1774; died October 7, 1776.

Eunice, born July 19, 1776, who married Amos Thompson, December 18, 1794, and died at New Haven, Connecticut, September 30, 1832.

Prudence, born August 4, 1778. She was admitted to the Second Church in 1808, and died unmarried February 20, 1816.

Samuel 2nd, born August 30, 1780, and died September 8, 1780.

James, born October 1st, 1781, married Eunice Stanly of Wethersfield November 12, 1803, and died in the spring of 1837.

Samuel 3rd, born March 3, 1784; married Hulda, daughter of Rev. Elisha Barns, at Canaan, New York. He died at Ballston Springs, New York, August 15, 1863.

Martha, born May 21, 1786, married at Hartford, May 8, 1808, Dr. Frederick Lathrop, a lineal descendant of Rev. John Lathrop, of Scituate, Massachusetts. He was born at Lebanon, New Hampshire, August 21, 1782. In 1815 he with his wife Martha and their family went to Lebanon, New Hampshire, where he lived until May, 1818, when they removed to Buffalo, New York. The journey was a slow and tedious one, partly by team and partly by canal, and on the way he decided to settle at Batavia, New York. The country was then wild and unsettled, and they lived in constant fear of the Indians. Martha, who was known as "Patty," told her grandson, Mr. Martin, of the conditions which then prevailed, and how on one occasion, when on her way home after night-fall, she crawled into a hollow log lying across the path to escape a party of Indians who were passing. Their dog stopped at the log and growled, was spoken to by his master, and went on. After they had gone she came out and made her way home. They did not remain long at Batavia, but removed to Aurelius, New

Martha Benton Lathrop
1857

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York, where they lived until the death of Dr. Lathrop, November 19, 1821. Martha was then left alone with a family, and her friends at Hartford being informed of her situation, her brother, James Benton, went from Hartford, in the spring of 1822, with an ox team and brought her and her family back to Hartford, the journey taking several weeks. After her return to Hartford, she, her mother, and her younger sister Betsey, lived together until the death of her mother in 1831, and then she and her sister lived together until the death of Betsey, June 24, 1847. Martha then went to live with her daughter Prudence, who married at New Haven, September 10, 1850, James B. Martin of Hartford. Charles Towneley Martin, referred to above, was their son. Martha Benton Lathrop died at her daughter's, Mrs. Martin's, home November 30, 1878, aged 92 years, 6 months and 9 days. She told her grandson, Mr. Martin, that during her long life, she never had a severe illness, and never had even a headache. She had an even temperament, and an amiable disposition, and was a devout Christian. At her death she was the oldest member of the Second Church at Hartford, to which she was admitted in 1824. The accompanying picture of her is from a daguerreotype in the possession of Mr. Martin, taken in June, 1857. Her children were Frederick, Jr., Orlando, Martha Ann, James, Elizabeth, Elderkin, Elijah Andrew, Lucinda, and Prudence Benton.

MOSES BENTON 1702

Betsey, born September 6, 1788, died June 24, 1847, unmarried. She was admitted to the Second Church in 1808. She was fifteen years old when her father died, and afterward lived with her mother and then with her mother and sister, Mrs. Martha Lathrop. She had a fine voice, and was the leading singer in Hartford during the early part of the century, singing in the Second Church as long as her health permitted.

George, born April 23, 1791, married in 1812 at Milton, New York, Almena, daughter of Sylvanus and Mary (Palmer) Rugg of Milton, and died at Greenfield, New York, July 26, 1848.

Sally, born February 18, 1794, married April 6, 1814, David North of Berlin, Connecticut, and died at Schoharie, New York, May 31, 1878.

MOSES BENTON 1702

Moses, born March 2, 1797, died March 10, 1797.

Andrew, born February 9, 1800, married first Henrietta Hotchkiss, of New Haven, who died in a few months. He then married Aurelia Wells of Hartford, by whom he had two children, Maria and Henry. She died and he married as his third wife Dolly Stowe of Charlton, Massachusetts. They had children, Andrew, Henry, and Susan. He married as his fourth wife Melissa Judd, a widow, and he died at Beloit, Wisconsin, January 12, 1865.

He was first a printer and also a paper-maker, but in 1831 he was sent by the American Sunday-school Union to St. Louis to establish Sunday-schools. He studied theology at Lane Seminary, Walnut Hill, Ohio, became a clergyman, and was settled over the Presbyterian Church at Mt. Pleasant, Ohio, until he lost his health and was obliged to resign. He was then for several years associate editor of the *Watchman of the Valley* in Cincinnati, Ohio, and subsequently engaged in establishing educational institutions in Ohio.

Ursula and Samuel and Samuel 2nd, children of Samuel and Prudence Benton, were buried in the orchard east of Samuel's house and back of it. Ursula's burial was the first in what is now called the "Old South Burying Ground" on Maple Avenue. This burying ground, containing about four acres, was purchased by the Town in December 15, 1800, of Thomas Seymour, for $400, and it contained the little orchard where Samuel's children were buried. He and his wife and other members of his family were afterwards buried there. The last burial in this ground was that of his daughter Martha, December 2, 1878, and she was the last survivor of his family.

Jacob Benton, Jr.

1729–1807

Jacob Benton, Jr.

1729–1807

JACOB BENTON, Jr., was born at Hartford, Connecticut, January 2, 1728/9, and baptized in the Second Church of Hartford on the 12th of the same month. He was the oldest son of Jacob Benton, Sr., and Elizabeth (Hinsdell) Benton, and was about six years old when his father removed from Hartford to Harwinton. As his father was one of the most prominent citizens of the Town and senior deacon of the church, and chairman of the school committee, Jacob doubtless had all the advantages for education which the town school and the church then afforded. I have in my possession original letters written by him when he was past middle age, which show that he wrote an excellent business hand, and I think he must have been trained in business and taught to keep accounts and records. The first record found of him is that of his election as "Lister and Rate maker" in Harwinton, December 3, 1751. He was reëlected to this office in 1752 and 1753, showing that he held this important town office three years in succession before he was twenty-five years old. (*Harwinton Town Votes*, Vol. I.) In 1754 he had cattle of his own, for he was then given an earmark for his cattle in Harwinton, the record being, "Feb. 19, 1754. Jacob Benton Jr. Ear mark for his creatures is a happany cut upon the fore side of the off ear." December 3, 1754, he was chosen surveyor of highways, and the Town at the same time voted that "Jacob Benton, Jr. shall take the care of the Meeting House and to repair the same as ocation shall Call & bring in his accoumpt to the Select men." He was chosen surveyor of highways in 1755 and in December, 1757, he was chosen Tythingman. December 4, 1759, the Town passed the following votes:—

"Voted that Jacob Benton, Junior shall Be the Quorester to tune the Salms in this sosiaty." "Voted that Amos Benton shall tune the same in Jacob Bentons absence." In December, 1765, the Town voted that "L^{t}. Jacob Benton be Lister & Rate

JACOB BENTON, JUNIOR 1729

maker." He does not appear by the record to have held any other town offices in Harwinton until 1775, when at a town meeting held September 19, it was voted "that Jacob Benton and Medad Hall be committee men for schooling for the year ensuing." The record also shows that he took the oath of fidelity in Harwinton April 13, 1778.

This oath was required by the acts of May and October, 1777, which required the person who took it to declare that he would faithfully maintain the government established in the State of Connecticut by the people, and that he "believed in his conscience that the King of Great Britain neither had nor of right ought to have any authority in or over the State." And the act provided that "no person in this state shall exercise any office, civil or military, or vote in any town, society, or other public meeting appointed by law, or plead in any court (except in his own case) until he has taken the oath of fidelity to the State." Also that no person should be an executor or administrator of any estate, or a guardian to any minor until he had taken the oath. (Hinman's *Connecticut in War of American Revolution*, pp. 221, 228.)

When his father's will was made, in June, 1760, Jacob was thirty-one years old, and the will shows that he had a son named Phineas and a daughter Elizabeth, and that he was then living in his own house at Harwinton. This house, built by him and still standing, is the residence of William S. Jones, and is called the "Winship Place." The accompanying is a picture of it as it now appears. The Town records of Harwinton do not show his marriage or the birth of any of his children, and the church records of Harwinton prior to 1790 are lost. But original letters from him and from his wife in my possession written from Rockingham, Vermont, between 1783 and 1805, show that his wife's name was Hannah, and leave little doubt that her maiden name was Slade.

These letters and family records show that Jacob and Hannah Benton had eight children: Phineas and Elizabeth, named in their grandfather's will, and Mabel, Jacob, Reynold, Chauncey, Mary, and Samuel Slade. Phineas and Elizabeth were both born before June, 1760, and doubtless at

Jacob Benton House, Harwinton
1760

Harwinton. The inscription on the tombstone of Elizabeth in the Harwinton cemetery states that she died August 23, 1820, aged 59 years, which would make the date of her birth 1761. But this is obviously not exact, for she was alive at the time of her grandfather's will in June, 1760, which would make her over sixty years of age when she died in 1820. It is not probable that she was born before Phineas, as in that case her age as stated on the tombstone would be incorrect by several years. I think she was probably born in 1759, and that Phineas was born in 1757 or 1758. The letters to which I have referred make no mention of Phineas but indicate clearly that Elizabeth was the oldest child then living.

JACOB BENTON, JUNIOR 1729

The Town records of Alstead, New Hampshire, show that Mabel was married there December 11, 1783. I think it may be fairly assumed that she was then about twenty-two years old, and was born in 1761, or about two years after the birth of Elizabeth. The inscription put upon the tombstone of Jacob in the cemetery at St. Johnsbury, Vermont, by his brother, Samuel Slade, states that he died September 7, 1828, aged 62, which shows his birth to have been in 1766.

The records of the Second Church at Hartford and an original letter in my possession from his brother Jacob, show that Reynold died March 26, 1811, aged 43, which would make his birth to have been in 1768, or two years after his brother Jacob's birth. The record in a family Bible now owned by Mrs. Fannie Smith of Hartford, a great-granddaughter of Chauncey, shows that he was born August 1, 1770, and the record in the family Bible of Samuel Kingsbury, now in my possession, states that his wife, Mary Benton, was born at Harwinton, Connecticut, September 18, 1772, while the record in the family Bible of Samuel Slade Benton shows that he was born at Harwinton, Connecticut, April 27, 1777. These recorded dates are undoubtedly correct, and I believe the others are substantially accurate. I have no doubt that all the children of Jacob and Hannah Benton were born in Harwinton, Connecticut, and that he lived there until about 1782.

JACOB BENTON, JUNIOR 1729

The Town records of Harwinton, the Connecticut Colony records, the Probate records, and family records show that Jacob Benton was in Harwinton at the following dates: February 19, 1754, when he received an earmark for his cattle; in 1754 and in 1755, when he was surveyor of highways; in 1757, when he was Tythingman; in 1759, when he was "Quorester"; June 11, 1760, when his father's will was made; November 30, 1760, when his father's will was proved; May, 1761, when he was made a lieutenant, the record being, "This Assembly do establish Mr. Jacob Benton to be Lieutenant of the east company or train band in the town of Harwinton in the first regiment in this Colony" (*Pub. Rec. Conn.*, Vol. V. p. 552); January, 1763, when an execution appears to have been issued against him as an executor of his father's will; in 1765, when he was lister; October 24, 1766, the date of the record of another earmark for his cattle, the record being, "24 Oct 1766 Jacob Benton's ear mark is a cross on the Right ear and on the under side of same across the ear," (in another handwriting is added) "this mark put to Nath[ll] Moody"; September 18, 1772, birth of his daughter Mary in Harwinton; January and May, 1774, when he was adjudged insolvent by the General Court on his own petition (*Pub. Rec. Conn.*, Vol. XIV. pp. 230, 276); in 1775, when he was one of the school committee; April 27, 1777, birth of his son, Samuel Slade, in Harwinton; and April 13, 1778, when he took the oath of fidelity in Harwinton.

The only thing to indicate that Jacob was not in Harwinton all this time is that in the list of unclaimed letters of January 25, 1766, published in the *Connecticut Courant*, February 3, 1766, the names of Jacob Benton and of his brother Amos of Harwinton appear, and in the same list of December 14, 1767, letters appear addressed to "Jacob Benton & Co. of Harwinton." But whether this is accurate, and whether Jacob then lived in Harwinton, and the letters were simply unclaimed, or whether he was then living temporarily elsewhere it is impossible to tell. That he and his wife were members of the church in Harwinton appears from the records of the Congregational Church in Rockingham, Vermont, now in the possession of Mrs. W. H. H.

Putnam of Springfield, Vermont, which show that September 10, 1786, his wife was admitted to that church by letter from the church in Harwinton, and that September 4, 1791, he was admitted to that church by letter from the church in Harwinton. The church records of Harwinton prior to 1790 being lost, it is impossible to tell when they became members there. I believe, however, that they were members at the time of their marriage or soon after it, and that all their children were baptized in the Harwinton Church. JACOB BENTON, JUNIOR 1729

Jacob and his brothers Moses and Barnabas were executors of his father's will, and they evidently each received a fair estate from their father. Jacob and his brother Amos went into business as "Jacob Benton & Co." The tradition is that they speculated and failed and lost their property, and the records confirm this. April 25, 1767, Amos Benton conveyed to John Smith, merchant, of New York City, land received from his father by will, and May 11, 1768, Jacob and Amos conveyed to John Smith, merchant, of New York City, land received by will from their father. I am inclined to think that Jacob, Sr., kept a country store in Harwinton, and that after his death his sons Jacob and Amos carried on the business unsuccessfully, and failed and lost their property sometime before 1774, in which year Jacob applied for and received a special act of insolvency from the Assembly. He was then nearly fifty years of age, and soon sought a new home for himself and family. The course of immigration from Connecticut was then up the river to New Hampshire and Vermont. John Slade, who I think was the brother of Hannah, Jacob's wife, had settled in Alstead, New Hampshire, then a frontier town, and Jacob and Hannah Benton went there, in 1782. He had with him his wife and all his children then living except Elizabeth, who was then married to Silas Gridley of Harwinton, and Chauncey, who was for some reason in Hartford. Mabel, doubtless the oldest except Elizabeth, was then about twenty or twenty-one years old, Jacob, the oldest son, sixteen or seventeen, Reynold about fourteen, Mary ten or eleven, and Samuel Slade five or six years old. Jacob Benton was not destitute, for he appears to have had property and to have been taxed in Alstead, but follow-

JACOB BENTON, JUNIOR 1729

ing what was then quite a general custom in New Hampshire and Vermont, to prevent new-comers from obtaining settlement so that if they became destitute the town would become chargeable for their support, the selectmen of Alstead caused Jacob Benton and his wife and children to be duly "warned to depart." The record of this is as follows:—

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE, CHESHIRE ss.

To SAML. KIDDER one of the Constables of Alstead, Greeting

IN the name of the Government & people of said state you are hereby Required forthwith to warn Jacob Benton & Hannah his wife, Mabel, Jacob, Reynold, Mary & Samuel Benton, their children to Depart out of this Town Immediately & no longer make it the place of their Residence under the pains that will follow. Hereof fail not & make Return of this warrant with your doings thereon as soon as may be

Given under our hands & seal of office this 26th March 1783.

AMOS SHEPARD
TIMO. FLETCHER } *Selectmen.*
SIMON BROOKS Jr.

April 7, 1783.

Serv^{d} this warrant by reading the same in the hearing of s^{d} persons.

SAML KIDDER
Const.

(*Alstead Records*, Vol. A, p. 154.)

As the law then was, such a warning notice, to be effective, must be given within one year after the person warned came into the town. (*Acts and Laws Province N. H.*, 1696–1725, p. 137.) This notice therefore shows that Jacob Benton and his wife and children went to Alstead as late at least as March, 1782, or about five years after the latest date at which there is any positive evidence of his being in Harwinton. He may perhaps have been in Hartford a portion of this time and have gone from there to Alstead, but there is no evidence of it. He evidently remained in Alstead two or three years, as his daughter Mabel married there December 11, 1783,

and is stated in the record to have been "of Alstead," but the admission of his wife to the Rockingham Church in September, 1786, shows that he probably went to Rockingham before that time, and an original letter from him which I have, written March 6, 1787, shows that he was then living there. He appears, however, to have been taxed in Alstead as late as 1787, as the Town records show that his "state tax of thirty one shillings certificates and five shillings school tax in John Slades hands" were abated March 11, 1788. It is likely that he removed from Alstead to Rockingham very early in 1787 and that his tax of that year in Alstead was abated as improperly assessed. Rockingham included Bellows Falls and was the head of navigation by boats from Connecticut, and I think Jacob Benton traded there in a small way for some time. He lived on a small place on the river road which was too small for a farm, and his letters to his son Reynold and others in Connecticut show that salt and other articles of merchandise were sent to him by boat, and that he sent back "shooks of staves" and other articles then produced in that part of Vermont and New Hampshire. He was a trader in Harwinton, and doubtless continued to trade in Rockingham until he was old and infirm, when he was supported by his son Jacob. His wife died at Rockingham July 21, 1805, and is doubtless buried in the churchyard of the old Congregational Church, though there is no record of it and no stone or other memorial to be found which shows it. After her death he was in feeble health, but he remained at Rockingham until the fall of 1806, when he went to his daughter Mary Kingsbury's home in Alstead, where he died January 13, 1807, at the age of seventy-eight. He was probably buried by the side of his wife at Rockingham, but it is impossible to tell definitely, as no record of it exists, and no gravestone can be found.

JACOB BENTON, JUNIOR 1729

The dates of the births and deaths of his children as nearly as they can be now fixed are as follows: Phineas, born at Harwinton, probably in 1757 or 1758 (he died, probably in childhood, at Harwinton); Elizabeth, born at Harwinton about 1759, died at Harwinton, August 23, 1820; Mabel, born about 1761, died at some time after 1830; Jacob, born

JACOB BENTON, JUNIOR 1729

at Harwinton, 1766, died at St. Johnsbury, Vermont, September 7, 1828; Reynold, born at Harwinton about 1768, died at Hartford, Connecticut, March 26, 1811; Chauncey, born at Harwinton, August 1, 1770, died at Hartford, Connecticut, August 17, 1833; Mary, born at Harwinton, September 18, 1772, died at Amherst, Massachusetts, June 19, 1841; Samuel Slade, born at Harwinton, April 27, 1777, died at Newbury, Vermont, December 15, 1857.

Jacob Benton and his wife were both earnest Christians, and without doubt all their children were baptized in the Congregational Church. It was to him that his father gave by will his "Great Bible," and he evidently instructed his children therein, for they all appear to have been familiar with the Scriptures and believers in the Congregational church. The following letters, the originals of which I have, show something of the character of Jacob and Hannah Benton, and should be of interest to their descendants: —

Jacob–Hannah Benton to Silas Gridley.

DEAR SON AND DAUGHTER: After our regards to you and your children would inform you that we are all as well as common and Mabel and her children. We received your letter in a few days after it was writ. Samuel was taken in December unwell and a pain settled in the side of his neck, and after a while it began to swell and very painful for a fortnight or more and then the Doctor opened it and then he was some better, but it was more than a month before he was fit to go to school.

But Mabel sold her horse a few days before she received your letter and was gone to keep house this winter for a man and it is so difficult to hire a horse for so long a journey, and it has got so late in the winter that it will not be safe to go with the sleigh and my mare is so heavy with foal that she will not do to ride. I intended to come and see you this winter but I do not see as I can at present. I sent Chauncey a letter when I sent you one, and another since, but have had none from him. We heard last week by a traveller that William Slade was gone to Woodbury or New Milford to be married. Mabel came home last Saturday to see us and is here now. We should be glad you

would send us a letter and about Brother Amos *(Several lines missing here)* JACOB HANNAH BENTON. JACOB BENTON, JUNIOR 1729

Rockingham, February 9th, 1789.

In handwriting of Jacob Benton.

Directed to Mr. Silas Gridley in Harwinton.

Jacob Hannah Benton to Silas and Elizabeth Gridley:

SILAS AND ELIZABETH: After our dearest regards to you and Reynold & your children would inform you that we are all as well as common, hoping this will find you so. But should be very glad to hear that it is so. We have never heard from you since your mother came from you. We have sent two or three letters but no answer. We take it very hard that Reynold nor you have not sent us a letter this Summer. It is uncertain whether our letters ever come to you or not, but you can pretty certainly send us a letter if you would leave it at Mr. Calder's at Hartford Ferry. We have sent there several times by the boatmen but they can find no letter for us. We want to know what Reynold is about. The neighbours keep inquiring whether we have heard from him till we are ashamed. We hope some of you will come and see us this fall and we want to have you write whether you intend to come or not. I intend to come and see you next winter if I can. We expect Mary will have another child in a month or two. We want to hear from your Aunt Dochester. Your Aunt Slade remains in a very weak and low state not like to live long. The rest of them are as well as common. Mabel was unwell a spell in the spring, but has got some better. We have not heard very lately from Chauncey. Jacob lives yet with Conol Bellows at the Yallow House. We see him very often. We shall expect that Reynold will come and see us soon as his business will allow of it if you cannot come. We have sent and waited so long to hear from you that we are discouraged of sending by private persons and send this by post. Shall not enlarge at this time, but remain

Your ever mindful parents,

JACOB HANNAH BENTON.

Rockingham July 29th, 1791

JACOB BENTON, JUNIOR 1729

SILAS AND ELIZABETH: After our sincerest regards to you and your children your father and mother, brothers and sisters, Lieutenant Joseph Cook and his wife, Mrs. Lankton and all inquiring friends, would inform that we are as well as common, sometimes troubled with rheumatism. Pains and infirmities of old age creep upon us. We have had some talk of going to see you this winter but have flung it by at present, but I intend if I am alive and well enough to go and see you before another winter. We received a letter from Tine Bradley the Summer past and they wrote that their daughter lay at the point of death and we have n't heard anything since. We want to hear from them and John.

We want to hear whether Sergeant *(Missing)* is alive and whether there is any of our acquaintance dead. Shall not enlarge, but ever remain,

Your mindfull parents
JACOB HANNAH BENTON.

Rockingham January the 9th, 1799

SILAS AND ELIZABETH: After our Sincerest Respects to you and your children youer Father and Mother and all inquiring friends would inform you that we are yet alive but are troubled with the infirmities of old age and lameness and other difficulties, and are left pretty much alone this Summer. Jacob and Samuel went up the River about 90 miles and bought each of them farms and Jacob came home in July but stayed but a day or two. Samuel came home last week and stayed but one night Mr. Gilbird came here last Saturday and told us that you were all well and neighbours in general—Wooster and Kingsberry and the three families were all well a few days ago Mable had a Daughter born about six weeks past. Mr. Gilbird informed us that there has been a great stir of religion in town of late and many added to the Church and hopefully to the Lord of such as shall be saved, which we rejoiced to hear of, and praying and hoping that you and all others will be careful to maintain good works and stand firm in the faith to the end. I laid out to go and see you this month but I cannot go till Jacob or

Samuel come home so I cannot set any time at present but intend to go as soon as I can. JACOB BENTON, JUNIOR 1729

I shall not inlarge at present but remain your mindfull Parent till Death. Praying and hoping that we and you all may so live here in the world that whether we have an opportunity of seeing the faces of one another in this world we may all meet in heaven, which may God of his infinite mercy grant through Christ

JACOB HANNAH BENTON.

Rockingham October the 5 1801.

The following letter to Elizabeth Gridley in 1803 is probably the last letter ever written by Hannah Benton.

Rockingham, July 6th.

DEAR Child. I take this opportunity to send my kind love to you all, and I hope these few lines will find you enjoying good health. I take this opportunity to write to you to inform you that I am exceeding unwell . . . to the dropsy consumption, and I am losing my flesh very fast and seemingly I am drawing quite fast by the borders of the grave. I want to have you come and see me if you can make it convenient and I wish you not to fail coming for I think you will never have an other opportunity of coming to see me I wish you not to put it any longer it comes a little cooler weather I want to have your husband come with you, but if he can't make it convenient I wish to have your oldest son come with you I must insist on your coming to see me once more. Your Father is well as common and your sisters and their familys Your sister Mary has lost her youngest son this spring Your brother Jacob and Samuel live an hundred miles up the river We heard from them last May and they were then well If you can make it convenient to come I want to have you come in a carriage for that will not weary you so much as riding a horse back and they say that it is a very good carriage road. I have no more to write but remain

Your ever mindful parent till death

HANNAH BENTON.

Directed on the outside to Mr. Silas Gridley, Harwinton.
No date. Evidently not sent by post.

JACOB BENTON, JUNIOR 1729

The following is probably the last letter written by Jacob Benton.

REYNOLD AND CHAUNCEY: After due regards would Inform you that your Mother grew some weaker along for this month past and seemed to be better on some account but was taken the Monday before last with a purging and we thought she was a dying for some time, but recovered again, and sometimes better and then worse, and her reason failed with her strength and she lived until Sabbath day the 21st and died about 3 o'clock afternoon. She had the jaunders and dropsy and no medicine seemed to do any good, and she was in great distress, seemed to be dying for 2 days. Mabel and Mary were here with her for a week before she died. She didn't have watchers but about nine days and failed very fast. I have a housekeeper that lives with me at present and will stay a spell longer. My pen and ink so poor shall not Inlarge but remain

Your lonesome Parent, JACOB BENTON.

Rockingham, July 24th, 1805.

After you have read the letter I wish you would wrap a paper around this and send it to Harwinton.

The following is a facsimile of the signature of Jacob Benton, written when he was seventy-six.

The following letter, which I have from his son Jacob to Silas Gridley and Elizabeth Gridley, states the circumstances of the death of Jacob Benton.

Alstead, January 28, 1807.

DEAR BROTHER AND SISTER: I have to acknowledge the receipt of a letter from Sister and felt sensibly touched with it. Feeling for the misfortune of your family and sincerely hope ere this that health may be enjoyed by you all.

JACOB BENTON, JUNIOR 1729

Although I have not written before it has not proceeded from an indifference toward you, but nothing but ordinary occurrences has happened with me until of late. Near the last of December I received a letter from Sister Kingsbury that Father was at their house lame and sick, but it being inconvenient for me to go immediately did not arrive till the 18th Jny, but he had died the Tuesday preceding, 13th, much sooner than had been previously expected. He lived two months or more at Kingsbury's last Winter, but would go back to Rockingham in the Spring where he lived in a very ill condition until November when Mr. Webb brought him to Alstead. He was confined to the room and his bed ever after. His disorder proved to be the dropsy and asthma. They had medical assistance but it gave him but temporary relief. He retained his rational faculties to the last. Mr. Kingsbury's family are passably well at present. They had a child last Spring that died. Candese has had Fits and much more misfortune, and it is with painful anxiety that I reflect on his being much involved in debt. Worcester family are well. One child four months old well when I left there. Circumstances favorable I stay at Waterford yet, but have not purchased anywhere. Any communication from you would be gladly received. My best wishes for your prosperity, and am with sincerity

Yours &c.
JACOB BENTON.

Brothers and Sisters of Jacob Benton, Jr.

ABIGAIL, daughter of Abigail (Carter) Benton, the first wife of Jacob Benton, Sr., was a half-sister of Jacob Benton, Jr. She was born at Hartford, September 18, 1725, and I think baptized in the First Church September 19, 1725. I have no further accurate information of her except that she was living at the date of her father's will, June 11, 1760, and is there mentioned as "my daughter Abigail." It is thought by some that she was the Abigail Benton who is said to have married Timothy Dodd, son of Timothy and Lydia (Flowers) Dodd, about 1752. (Hinman's *Conn. Settlers*, p. 209.)

PHINEAS, born at Hartford, January 10, 1731/2, was the second son of Jacob Benton, Sr., and Elizabeth (Hinsdell) Benton, and I think died August 16, 1749.

AMOS, son of Jacob Benton, Sr., and Elizabeth (Hinsdell) Benton, was born at Hartford, November 10, 1732, and baptized November 12, 1732. He married Elizabeth, daughter of Nathaniel and Sarah (Hinsdale) White, at Hartford, May 13, 1756. She was born August 28, 1726, and died at Harwinton, August 17, 1757. They had one child—

Amos, born at Harwinton, March 27, 1757.

Amos Benton married, second, Jerusha Bull of Harwinton, January 18, 1759, and they had the following children born in Harwinton:—

Nathaniel White, born January 5, 1760.

Rimmon, born May 29, 1761; died in December, 1831.

Jerusha, born November 25, 1762.

Abigail, born January 23, 1765; died June 3, 1792.

Ichabod, born September 13, 1767; died January 14, 1854.

Roger, born August 13, 1770.

Phineas, born September 12, 1772; died January 30, 1774, at Farmington, Connecticut.

SINCE the foregoing Sketch of Jacob Benton, Jr., was printed, the Harwinton Church records from 1774 *to May* 1, 1784, *have been found. They show that at some time between February,* 1774, *and October* 23, 1774, "*Jacob Benton and Hannah his wife*" *were admitted as members; also that in October,* 1775, "*Honnor, daughter of Jacob Benton,*" *was baptized, and that in October,* 1777, "*Samuel Slade, son of Jacob Benton,*" *was baptized.*

Jacob Benton was one of the minority in the Harwinton Church who were opposed to the pastor in the controversy as to baptism, which is stated in the records as follows:—

"28 *Sept.,* 1778. . . . *there is a difficulty Arose in the Society by Reason of the Revd Mr David Perry Refusing to Baptise Children of those parents who were in Covenant when sd Revd Mr. Perry Ordained in the work of the Ministry.*

"*Voted it is the Minds of the Society that the Revd Mr David Perry is holden by a Covenant he has made with his People to Baptise the Children of those person who was in Covenant when the Revd Mr Perry was Ordained and Look upon it the Duty of the Revd Mr Perry to do the same.*"

March 10, 1779, *twenty members, including Jacob Benton, were voted to have been guilty of* "*abusive and unchristian behavior toward both the pastor and church,*" *and April* 30, 1779, *they were all* "*suspended.*"

This schism in the Harwinton Church resulted in the dismissal of Mr. Perry December 23, 1783, *and caused more than one-fourth of the inhabitants of the town to leave their connection with the original society. Jacob Benton, however, doubtless retained his membership, for in* 1791 *he was admitted to the church at Rockingham, Vermont, upon letter from the Harwinton Church.*

They had also one child born at Lenox, Massachusetts— *Phineas* 2nd, born September 12, 1777.

Jerusha (Bull) Benton, wife of Amos Benton, died June 3, 1793, and he died February 20, 1797, both I think at Lenox, Massachusetts.

Amos, son of Amos and Elizabeth (White) Benton, born March 27, 1757, left two sons, Amos and Erastus. After his death they sold their little homestead in Lenox, Massachusetts, and moved into the western part of New York, as I am informed. I do not know whom Erastus married, or anything of his family, except that he is said to have had two sons. I do not know whom Amos married, but I am told that he had a family of thirteen children, all twins but one. He is said to have been an elder in the Reformed Methodist Church.

Nathaniel White married and had sons, who, I am informed, went to Michigan.

Rimmon is said to have settled in Shoreham, Vermont, and to have had one son, Joseph Benton, who settled in Maine and had a family of ten children.

Abigail, daughter of Amos and Jerusha (Bull) Benton, married Barnabas Ames at Harwinton, as I am informed.

Roger married and had sons, who, I am informed, now live in Newark, New Jersey.

BARNABAS, son of Jacob Benton, Sr., and Elizabeth (Hinsdell) Benton, born at Hartford, January 3, 1734/5, and the youngest brother of Jacob Benton, Jr., married Martha Griswold February 15, 1758. They had ten children, all born in Harwinton:—

Martha, born February 27, 1759.
Barnabas, born November 24, 1760; died September 2, 1763.
Lorene, born June 22, 1762.
Barnabas 2nd, born April 17, 1764; died May 3, 1764.
Barnabas 3rd, born March 8, 1765.
Seth, born May 20, 1767.
William, born April 22, 1769.
Lydia, born May 4, 1771.
Abigail, born April 19, 1774; died August 8, 1857.
Cynthia, born July 18, 1776.

JACOB BENTON, JUNIOR 1729

Martha, the oldest child of Barnabas, is said to have married Joseph Cooley, March 14, 1779.

Lorene married Ashbel Porter.

William, son of Barnabas, married Lois Kellogg, March 17, 1793, and they had four children born at Harwinton:—

Willis, born January 8, 1794.

Lois, born March 9, 1796.

William Pomeroy, born July 7, 1798.

Maria, born September 29, 1800.

Abigail, daughter of Barnabas, married Job Alfred at Harwinton, October 9, 1793, and died at Harwinton, August 8, 1857.

Of the other children of Barnabas I have no information.

I believe the above with regard to Amos and Barnabas, brothers of Jacob Benton, Jr., and their families to be substantially accurate, but I have not been able with the time at my command to investigate sufficiently to be certain about it, and print it only as the best information I have.

ELIZABETH, youngest daughter of Jacob and Elizabeth (Hinsdell) Benton, born at Harwinton, June 17, 1738, is not mentioned in her father's will, made December 11, 1760, and I have no information concerning her. I think she probably died in childhood.

Children of Jacob Benton, Jr.

THE children of Jacob Benton, Jr., were all doubtless born at Harwinton, Connecticut, most, if not all, of them, I have no doubt, in the house built by him and now standing. *(Shown on page 82, ante.)*

PHINEAS was probably born in 1757 or 1758, and though living at the date of his grandfather's will in 1760, doubtless died in childhood.

Sketches of the other children of Jacob Benton, Jr., namely:—

ELIZABETH, born probably in 1759,
MABEL, born about 1761,
JACOB, born in 1766,
REYNOLD, born probably in 1768,
CHAUNCEY, born August 1, 1770,
MARY, born September 18, 1772,
SAMUEL SLADE, born April 27, 1777,

will be found on the pages which follow.

The information for these sketches, with the exception of that of Samuel Slade, my grandfather, has been very difficult to obtain, and I am not certain of the accuracy of all the names and dates given. But I think the sketches are substantially accurate and that they give as much information as can now be had of the children of Jacob Benton, Jr. The descendants of Elizabeth, Mabel, Reynold, Chauncey, and Mary are widely scattered, and it has not been possible within the time at my command to obtain more knowledge of them than I have above given.

Elizabeth Benton

1759–1820

Elizabeth Benton

1759–1820

ELIZABETH was born probably as early as 1759. She married Silas Gridley at Harwinton, December 2, 1779. She died at Harwinton, August 23, 1820. The inscription on her tombstone is "In memory of Mrs. Elizabeth Gridley, Wife of Mr. Silas Gridley, who died August 23, 1820, Aged 59 years." Silas Gridley died at Harwinton, February 28, 1839, at the age of eighty-one. They had four children, all born at Harwinton:—

SILAS, born December 28, 1780, married Huldah Colt of Harwinton. They afterwards removed to Bristol, Connecticut, where they both died and are buried. He died at about sixty-eight years of age and she survived him for many years.

SALMON, born July, 1783, married first Cynthia Bull of Harwinton. She died and is buried in Harwinton. He then removed from Harwinton to Burlington, Connecticut, where he married his second wife, Mary Pettibone, a widow, of Burlington. They afterwards removed to "Unionville" in Farmington, Connecticut, where she died. She was buried in Burlington. He died at Unionville, April 28, 1807, but was buried in Harwinton by the side of his first wife.

JOEL, born February 1, 1785, married first Anne Sanford, who died about 1840 at Harwinton. He then married Clara Cosslett of Southington, Connecticut. He died May 23, 1863, at Harwinton, and was there buried. She survived him and died at Harwinton at the house of her stepson, George Gridley, now of Waterbury, Connecticut. She is buried in Harwinton.

LYMAN, born June 1, 1800, married Lois Alfred, May 1, 1827, and died at Harwinton, May 30, 1877.

Elizabeth (Benton) Gridley was evidently much beloved by all her brothers and sisters, and is said to have been much respected by every one who knew her. Her daughter-in-law, Mrs. Lyman Gridley, says that she was a large woman, very

ELIZABETH BENTON 1759

capable and helpful, and much respected in the town. I have no doubt she and her husband were members of the Harwinton Congregational Church, though this cannot be absolutely stated, as the church records of the time when they would have been admitted as members are now lost.

Silas Gridley was in the Revolutionary army and, as I am informed by his grandson, George Gridley, drew a small pension for many years.

The widow of Lyman Gridley is still living in Harwinton, at the age of ninety-eight years, in good health with unimpaired faculties, on the farm where Silas and Elizabeth (Benton) Gridley lived.

Mabel Benton

1761–1829 (?)

Mabel Benton

1761–1829 (?)

MABEL was born probably in 1761, and was with her father's family in Alstead, New Hampshire, in 1783. The town records of Alstead show that "The Intention of marriage between Jon^{a} Watts & Mable Benton" was entered with the town clerk July 1, 1783, and that "The Bands of Matrimony between Jonathan Watts and Mable Benton Both of Alstead was solemnised December 11, 1783, Mr. Jacob Mann Pastor." I find no record of the births of her children by this marriage, but letters from her father and mother in my possession show that she had a daughter, Hannah, born in Alstead probably in 1785, and a son, David, born in Alstead January 5, 1786.

Jonathan Watts died at Alstead in 1788, and was buried there. June 3, 1789, Mabel (Benton) Watts married John Worcester of Alstead. From April, 1788, to June, 1791, there was no settled pastor of the Alstead Church and this marriage was therefore solemnized by a justice of the peace. The record is "Alstead, June 3, 1789. The Bands of Matrimony solemnised between John Worcester and Mabel Watts both of Alstead per Nath^{el} S. Prentice justice peace." I find no record of the births of children by this marriage, but old family letters show that there were four sons,—John, Ira, Arad, and Ralph, and two daughters, Ann and Mary S., usually called "Sally." They were all born in Alstead and I think their births were in the above order.

John Worcester died at Alstead, August 1, 1809, and his widow Mabel (Benton) Worcester continued to live there until as late as June, 1827. She appears to have had a good farm, well stocked, in Alstead and to have been in comfortable circumstances there for many years. Soon after 1827 she sold what remained of her land in Alstead and went to St. Johnsbury, Vermont, doubtless to live with her brother Jacob, with whom she was living when he died, in Septem-

MABEL BENTON 1761

ber, 1828. She was living in St. Johnsbury, probably with one of her married daughters, in May, 1831, when she conveyed her interest as heir of her brother Jacob to her brother Samuel Slade. She seems to have been a very strong, capable woman, and to have done much for her children while she had the means, but by aiding her son, Arad, to raise money, and in other ways she became obliged to sell her farm in Alstead, and was left in her old age with very little property. She appears to have "attended meeting" in Alstead, and I have no doubt she was a member of the First Congregational Church organized there in 1778, the records of which prior to 1791 are lost. I have been unable as yet to ascertain definitely when and where she died, but have no doubt she died at St. Johnsbury, Vermont, not long after the death of her brother Jacob in September, 1828.

Her oldest child, Hannah Watts, married a Sawyer at Alstead, probably in 1807, and died in child-birth May 7, 1808, leaving a daughter to the care of her mother. This daughter was living with her grandmother, Mabel Worcester, at Alstead in December, 1817.

David Watts, the oldest son, married Beulah Johnson at Alstead. She was born November 27, 1791, probably at Alstead, and died at Waterbury, Vermont, August 6, 1852. David Watts went from Alstead to Middlesex, Vermont, where he was living in December, 1817. He afterwards removed to Waterbury, Vermont, and acted for his mother in the settlement of her brother Jacob's estate in 1830. He died at Waterbury, Vermont, August 31, 1858. He and his wife were both buried at Waterbury Centre, Vermont. They had five children:—

ALFRED, born January 29, 1812; died December 18, 1873.
SYLVESTER, born August 11, 1816; died March 13, 1819.
LOREN D., born March 17, 1821; died June 23, 1895.
OSCAR F., born March 19, 1825.
ZENAS, born April 2, 1828; died in September, 1887.

Oscar F. Watts, above named, married Leucena K. Pike, April 3, 1849, and they had five children:—

David O., born February 14, 1851.
Rufus A., born December 8, 1854.

MABEL BENTON 1761

Beulah J., born November 10, 1858.
Loren R., born May 5, 1863.
Aaron Y., born July 19, 1865.

I do not know whether Alfred, Loren, and Zenas Watts, children of David Watts and grandchildren of Mabel (Benton) Watts, were all married, but I am informed that none of them had children who lived beyond childhood.

Oscar F. Watts, I am told, is now living in Vermont. The above information as to the marriage and descendants of David Watts is given me by Rufus A. Watts, a grandson of David, and a great-grandson of Mabel (Benton) Watts, now living at Waterbury Centre, Vermont.

John and Arad Worcester were living with their mother, Mabel (Benton) Worcester, on her farm in Alstead in 1811, and her son Ralph Worcester lived there with her in 1817, as appears by letters of that period. Beyond this fact I have no information as to John, but these letters also show that Arad was married and living in Alstead in May, 1817, about to remove to Middlesex, Vermont, and that Ralph was married and living in Waterbury, Vermont, in 1827, at which time Ira Worcester was living in Alstead. Ann Worcester married a Chickering. Mary S., known as Sally, also married, but I do not know whom. In 1827 they were both living at St. Johnsbury, Vermont, as I am informed.

Jacob Benton

1766–1828

Jacob Benton

1766–1828

JACOB BENTON, the oldest son of Jacob Benton, Jr., who grew to manhood, was born at Harwinton, Connecticut, in the year 1766. There is no official or family record yet found of the date of his birth, but he died at St. Johnsbury, Vermont, September 7, 1828, and the inscription put upon his tombstone by his brother Samuel Slade states that he was then sixty-two years of age, which shows that he was born in 1766.

March 26, 1783, when he was sixteen or seventeen years old, he was with his father and mother in Alstead, New Hampshire, and was included in the "warning out" notice to them and their family. He doubtless came from Connecticut with his father and mother within the year before that date. I think he went with his father to Rockingham, Vermont, the town opposite Walpole, and worked as a farm laborer, at first, but soon after was employed by Colonel John Bellows in the Bellows Tavern, known as the "Yellow House," at Walpole, New Hampshire. He was certainly employed there in 1790, and probably a few years earlier.

The town records of Rockingham, Vermont, show that he was chosen a "Tithanman" [Tythingman], March 28, 1791. The duty of a Tythingman was to preserve order in the meeting-house, for which purpose he usually carried a long rod, and to enforce the "Act for the Due Observation of the Sabbath." This act provided among other things that "Every person who shall go from his or her place of abode on the first day of the week, or Lord's day, unless to and from the public worship of God, or on some work or business of necessity or mercy, shall pay a fine not exceeding sixteen shillings; and whatever person or persons shall keep or stay at the outside of the meeting-house during the time of public worship (there being sufficient room in the house) or unnecessarily withdraw themselves from the public worship, go with-

JACOB BENTON 1766

out-doors, or profane the time by playing or profanely talking, shall pay a fine not exceeding six shillings."*

He was an industrious and thrifty young man, and evidently saved his earnings, for October 8, 1792, when he was twenty-six years old, he purchased of Benjamin Bellows and John Bellows, for twelve pounds, four acres of land on the Connecticut River in Rockingham, and is described in the deed as of Walpole, and as a "husbandman." This deed was acknowledged in Walpole, New Hampshire, October 28, 1794, a little over two years after its date, and was not recorded until September 24, 1805. I think he bought this land as a home for his aged father and mother.

December 10, he purchased one hundred and forty acres of wild land in Walpole for two hundred and ten pounds, of Samuel Grant and Levi Bellows, and on the same day he sold sixty acres of this land to John Chandler of Alstead, New Hampshire, for ninety pounds. September 26, 1800, he sold the remaining eighty acres of this land to James Chandler of Alstead for four hundred and eighty dollars. In the deed he describes himself as Jacob Benton, Jr., of Rockingham, Vermont, where he made his home with his parents.

He went with his brother Samuel to Waterford in 1801, and took the freeman's oath in that town on the first Tuesday of September in that year. He lived in Waterford, with the exception of one year, 1807, for twenty-one years. In 1802 and 1803 he paid only the poll tax. In 1804 he was a petit juror and one of the listers. In the years 1804, 1805, and 1806 he was taxed for one horse, the assessment of which shows that it was a valuable animal, I think without doubt one of the original "Vermont Morgans."

His mother died at Rockingham, July 21, 1805, and his father continued to reside there until his death January 13, 1807; and January 29, 1807, Jacob sold the four acres of land in Rockingham where his father and mother had lived to Benjamin Stephens, of Rockingham, for one hundred dollars. In the deed he describes himself as of Waterford, and the land is described as being "on the bank of the Connec-

* "*Statutes of the State of Vermont*," *Ed.* 1787, *p.* 135.

ticut River." The deed was acknowledged in Westminster, Vermont, on the day of its date. JACOB BENTON 1766

His name does not appear on the tax list of Waterford in 1807. March 18, 1808, he purchased one hundred acres of land in Waterford for two hundred dollars, of one Rice, which he reconveyed to Rice February 25, 1810, from which I infer that he purchased the land for timber and reconveyed it after he had cut the timber. He was unmarried and lived a part of the time with his brother Samuel, and boarded in other families in Waterford the remainder of the time. He seems to have accumulated money, as in 1808 he was taxed in Waterford for five hundred dollars "money at interest," in 1810 and 1811 for six hundred dollars, and in 1812 for eight hundred dollars and one watch. In 1814 he was taxed on nine hundred dollars "money at interest," and in the years 1815, 1816, and 1817 on one thousand dollars. In 1818 he was taxed on twelve hundred dollars, and in 1820 on eighteen hundred dollars "money at interest" and one horse. In 1821 and 1822 he was taxed for two thousand dollars "money at interest" and one two-year-old colt.

During the latter part of the time that he lived in Waterford, he was quite active in town affairs. In 1814 he was second selectman, in 1815 first selectman, in 1818 and 1819 he was chosen petit juror. At a special town meeting, March 29, 1820, he was chosen "Agent to petition the Supreme Court for a committee to alter the North Road, so called, and to attend the County Court to use his endeavours to stop the fine from coming on to said Road." The warning for this meeting stated there had been a complaint because this road was out of repair, and the town doubtless feared that it would be indicted therefor. In 1820 he was town highway surveyor, and in September, 1820, was unanimously elected to represent the town in the General Assembly of the State. In 1821 he was one of the town auditors, and in September, 1821, he was again elected representative to the General Assembly. In February, 1822, he was chosen as "delegate to represent the town of Waterford in the convention to be held at Mansfield on the third Tuesday of February, 1822," which was a convention to revise the constitution of the State. In 1822

JACOB BENTON 1766

he was second selectman and one of a committee of three "to report how much money had been collected during the year and what had been done with it."

July 4, 1822, he bought what was known as the "Lord Farm" in St. Johnsbury for twenty-seven hundred dollars. This was one of the best farms in Caledonia County, and he removed to it that summer. He appears to have mortgaged it on the same day he bought it to John W. Chandler of Peacham, Vermont, for two thousand dollars. This farm was conveyed as containing two hundred and twelve acres, being "the homestead whereon the said Lord now liveth, lying at the South end of St. Johnsbury Plain, so called." St. Johnsbury was first settled on this farm in 1786, by James Adams and Martin Adams, his son. It was occupied by Jacob Benton and Samuel Slade Benton from 1822 until 1841, and hence was called "Benton's Meadows."

Jacob Benton was first taxed in St. Johnsbury in 1823. He was then fifty seven or eight years old, and during the remaining five or six years that he lived in St. Johnsbury he does not appear to have held any town or other office. He was taken suddenly ill while attending "Freeman's Meeting," Tuesday, September 3, 1828, and went to his home, where he died on Saturday of the same week, September 7. He had been in good health before, and his brother Samuel, in announcing the death to his friends in Connecticut, said that the death was "a very unexpected stroke of mortality." He was buried in the cemetery at St. Johnsbury Plain, now known as the "old cemetery," on the upper side of the cemetery next the highway, about fifty rods from the entrance. His grave is marked by a large freestone slab with the following inscription:—

"Jacob Benton
Esq.
Died Sept. 7, 1828
Aged 62 Years"

I do not remember that my grandfather or grandmother ever told me anything about him, but my Uncle Jacob, who was named for him, and my father, both remembered him well.

They admired him much, and have both told me many things about his kindness and excellent qualities. They thought he was the best man they ever knew. Old family letters which have come into my possession show that he certainly was most kind and helpful to his parents and the other members of his family. He furnished a home for his father and mother, and I think practically supported them in their old age. Upon hearing of his father's illness in January, 1807, he at once went from Waterford to Alstead, where his father was ill and died at the house of his daughter, Mrs. Kingsbury, and paid all the funeral expenses and charges. In the winter of 1811, when his brother Reynold was ill at Hartford, he went from Waterford there, and remained until his brother's death in March. He was the only relative there when his brother died, and as Reynold was in destitute circumstances, he paid the expenses of his illness and funeral, and as he wrote to his sister Elizabeth, saw him buried "with decency." He was himself not well at this time, being troubled, as he wrote his sister, with a bad cough, and on his return to Waterford he found the travelling very bad, and went a good portion of the distance on foot. He wrote his sister from Waterford that he found "much perplexity" with his own affairs on his return, having been absent so long.

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In the spring of 1817, he visited his sister, Mary Kingsbury, at Gill, Massachusetts, and visited his sister, Mabel Worster, then a widow, at Alstead, apparently for the purpose of seeing if he could be of assistance to them, as they were in pecuniary difficulties. He was absent from his home for some time, and on his return he wrote his nephew, Joel Gridley, of Harwinton, that he found his own affairs had suffered in consequence of his absence. His letter is quite full with regard to the condition of affairs, giving the prices of the produce at the various places where he went, and noting the remarkable fact that in Alstead, Keene, etc., the prices of hay and oats, potatoes and wheat, were more than double the prices in the "country above Newbury, Vermont."

In October of the same year he went again to Alstead to see his sister Mabel, and stayed several weeks with her and with the Slades. On his return he wrote his brother-in-law,

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Gridley, in December, saying among other things that he had been "so unwell as to consent to send for a doctor, but recovered without one." I think he subsequently took his sister, Mabel Worster, to St. Johnsbury, and that she kept house for him and was living with him there when he died.

My father says his Uncle Jacob was a very particular man about everything, and did whatever he had to do in the very best way; that he always wanted the very best things, kept his buildings and grounds in most excellent condition, and carried on his farm better than his neighbors. He was very fond of horses, and one of the first to breed the noted Vermont Morgans. His brother Samuel wrote to his nephew, Joel Gridley, in 1830, that he had a fine colt, saying, "It is one of your uncle's breed."

His letters which I have are well written in a good handwriting, and expressed in a concise, excellent English style. I think he must have had better advantages for education than my grandfather. When he was a child his father was engaged in trade in Harwinton, and Jacob was doubtless sent to school there.

I think he was somewhat of a gossip, kindly and curious, interested and helpful in the affairs of others. He had a quaint, dry humor, and frequently pointed his expression of opinion as to the conduct of others by references to the Scripture, with which he was evidently very familiar. For instance, when his sister Mabel, in whose welfare he seems to have taken much interest, and whose oldest son had turned out badly and squandered her money, began to give money to another son contrary to her brother's views of what was proper, he referred to her conduct in a letter to his sister Elizabeth by the simple citation, "See Ezekiel xix: 5." Reference to the citation shows this verse: "Now when she saw that she had waited, and her hope was lost, then she took another of her whelps, and made him a young lion."

I think he must have liked books, for when he died he appears by the appraisal of his estate to have owned a large Bible, appraised at four dollars, another appraised at forty cents, a hymn-book appraised at fifty cents, a copy of Thomson's *Seasons*, a copy of Milton's *Works*, and a copy of

Young's *Night Thoughts*, besides "two old books." I doubt if anybody in town except the minister had more. JACOB BENTON 1766

The following is an abstract of what appears in the Journals of the Assembly and of the Constitutional Convention with regard to Jacob Benton's action as a member:—

The Journal of the House does not show that he served on any committee except the special committee to equalize the appraisement of real estate among the several towns.

There were then, however, only eleven standing committees of four members each, making forty-four out of the entire membership of nearly two hundred. The custom seems to have been to appoint committees upon separate bills and petitions and resolutions as introduced, and upon some of these he served. He does not appear to have promoted legislation by introduction of bills or resolutions. He voted against the bill to revise the judiciary system of the State, which was passed.

He voted for an act, which was passed, limited in operation to one year only, to regulate the practice of physic and surgery. This act provided that no person could collect compensation for administering medicine or performing surgical operations, unless he was a member of some legally constituted medical society in Vermont, or had a degree as bachelor or doctor of physics, or was licensed by the judges of the Supreme Court, who were authorized to issue such licenses, calling to their assistance two or more regular physicians, members of some legally constituted medical society in the State. (Chapter 15, Acts 1820.)

In 1822 he was chairman of the committee on change of names.

The Journal shows that he voted at every call of the yeas and nays, which were then called on nearly every measure of any consequence. He voted against a bill to reduce the pay of members from one dollar and a half to one dollar a day. He voted for a proposition, which was defeated, giving males twice as much by inheritance in real estate as females. He voted against an act for the preservation of fish in the streams of Vermont, and against an act to prevent intemperance, and voted steadily for an act granting a new trial in the famous

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case of Heman Allen *v.* Silas Hathaway. This act, which was passed November 13, 1822, was one of the last acts granting new trials in Vermont, and it was passed by a large majority against the unanimous report of the judiciary committee. He voted against the bill to grant aid to the University of Vermont, against all bills for incorporating banks, and generally against all private claim bills.

He voted against all bills granting new trials, except in Allen *v.* Hathaway.

He voted in favor of a bill, which was passed, lessening time of imprisonment for poor debtors before they could take the poor debtor's oath; but voted against the proposed amendment to the bill giving a justice of the peace authority to administer the poor debtor's oath. The law then provided that the poor debtor's oath could be taken before commissioners under the statute of March 9, 1797. Mr. Benton voted for the bill, which was passed, providing that these commissioners should be appointed by the Supreme Court at the jury session instead of at the law term in each county.

In 1819 an act was passed to exempt judgment debtors on executions issued by justices of the peace from arrest, unless the damages exceeded fifteen dollars. Early in the session of 1822 a bill was introduced to repeal this act, and the controversy over it extended through the entire session. Mr. Benton, in common with the members from the small towns, where most debts were collected by suits before justices, voted at every stage for the repeal of this act. The Governor and Council first non-concurred in the repeal of this act, and then proposed amendments thereto, but finally yielded and the bill became a law. (Chapter 18, Acts 1819.) Vermont had then no Senate, and acts of the Legislature did not then become laws at the session when passed unless concurred in by the Governor and Council. (Vermont Const., 1786, section xvi. "An Act directing the form of passing Laws." Passed February 27, 1787.)

He voted against an amendment to the United States Constitution, proposed for the consideration of the several States by Pennsylvania, providing that Congress should create no bank or other moneyed institution except within the District

of Columbia. The admission of Missouri into the Union with a constitution authorizing slavery seems to have been a matter of general interest to the Assembly at that time, and Mr. Benton with all other members voted for a lengthy preamble and resolutions reciting that the Assembly viewed with "regret and alarm the attempt of the inhabitants of Missouri to obtain admission into the Union under a constitution which legalizes and secures the continuance of slavery," and that in its opinion "the principles, powers, and restrictions contained in the reported constitution of Missouri are anti-republican and repugnant to the Constitution of the United States and subversive of the inalienable rights of man." (Assembly Journal, 1820, p. 241.)

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The Constitutional Convention, which met at Montpelier in February, 1822, was called to consider articles of amendment proposed by the Council of Censors, on March 24, 1821.

The first amendment provided for two branches of the General Assembly, and that all money bills should originate in the House of Representatives. Mr. Benton voted against this, and it was rejected. The second provided for representation according to population, thus taking power from the small towns. Mr. Benton voted against, and it was rejected. The third provided that no member of the House of Representatives or the Council (that is, of the legislative body) should while such be appointed a judge, sheriff, bailiff, State's attorney, justice of the peace, or superintendent or any other officer of the State's prison. Mr. Benton voted for this amendment, but it was rejected. The fourth enlarged the powers of the Governor in certain respects, and limited his power in respect to granting pardons and commanding the military. Mr. Benton voted against this amendment, which was rejected. The fifth article extended the term of judges of the Supreme Court to seven years, and provided for impeachment for misconduct. Mr. Benton voted against this, and it was rejected.

The appraisal of his estate shows that he had excellent wearing apparel, including "a silk vest," which was certainly an article of luxury then, and that he had a well-furnished house and a well-kept farm, with abundant live stock, cattle,

JACOB BENTON 1766

horses, and sheep. The estate was appraised at four thousand, four hundred and thirty dollars and eighty-four cents, and then the appraisers appear to have found "50 bu. of corn more," which was appraised at twenty-five dollars, making a total of four thousand, four hundred and fifty-five dollars and eighty-four cents, of which the farm, furniture, stock, etc., were appraised at three thousand three hundred and thirty-six dollars and forty-five cents, and the balance was in notes and demands.

He left no will, and his brother Samuel was appointed administrator September 13, 1828, and administered the estate, although no record of the settlement is now to be found in the Probate Court.

The following is a copy of the record of the administration and appraisal of his estate so far as it now exists:—

¶ *Jacob Benton's Estate*

STATE OF VERMONT
Caledonia District ss.

AT a Probate Court holden at Danville in said District on the 13th. day of September, A. D. 1828, by Benj. F. Deming, Esqr., Judge of said Court, Samuel S. Benton of Waterford, in said district, was duly appointed administrator of the Estate of Jacob Benton late of St. Johnsbury in said District deceased, who accepted said trust and gave bond with surety to make and return to the register of said Court a true and perfect inventory of said estate, on or before the 13th. day of December next ensuing and also to render an account of his administration to said Court on or before the thirteenth day of September, A. D. 1829.

And Luther Clark of St. Johnsbury, Joseph Armington of Waterford, and Levi P. Parks of Barnet, all in said District, were duly appointed appraisers to make and return upon oath an inventory of said estate, both real and personal, to the register of said Court within three months from the date hereof, and a warrant issued accordingly.

And the said Administrator having represented said estate *Insolvent*, the said Clark, Armington, and Parks were duly appointed Commissioners to receive, examine, and adjust all claims and demands of all persons against said estate, and six

months from the date hereof is allowed for the several creditors to said estate to exhibit and prove their claims, and for said commissioners to make and return to said Court of all the claims which shall have been laid before them, with the sums allowed and disallowed on each claim, and a Commission of Insolvency issued accordingly. JACOB BENTON 1766

By order of the Judge,

ATTEST SAM'L B. MATTOCKS, *Register.*

¶ *List of Claims*

To the Hon. The Probate Court for the District of Caledonia

WE the subscribing commissioners appointed to receive, examine, and adjust all claims and demands of all persons against the estate of Jacob Benton of St. Johnsbury in said district, deceased, and all claims and demands exhibited in offset thereto, having been duly sworn to the faithful discharge of the trust reposed in us, and having given public notice of the time and places when and where we would attend to the business of our appointment by advertising the same three weeks successively in the North Star, printed at Danville, and by posting up notifications in Barnet, Waterford, and St. Johnsbury as directed in the warrant, have attended to the service assigned us and report the following as the list of claims with the several offsets made by us.

Morrill Stevens acct., allowed at $5.15 & settled by offset except	$2.80
I. & L. Clarke account, $6.22; Daniel Harvey, $0.50	6.72
John Armington account, $1.30; Abel Butler, $2.50	3.80
Clark Cushman account, allowed at $370.22 and settled by offset on note, leaving balance due on note $523.48	
Sarah Powers acct., $17.00; Ezekiel Vose's acct., $5.00	22.00
Emery Goss acct., $69.17; Reuben C. Benton's acct., $18.85	88.02

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Jo Barney acnhct., $1.25; Reuben C. Benton's note in fav. D. Goss, $36.85	38.10
Joseph Thurston acct., .50; Jacob Ide, 2d., Do., $2.85; Mordecai Hale, $12.27	15.62
Erastus Frilding, $5.43; E. & T. Fairbanks, $4.71	10.14
Hannah Benton acct., $1.00; Clarke & Bishop, $1.66	2.66
Hollis Roberts acct., allowed at $14.32, and settled by endorsements on notes against him	
Abel M. Rice's acct. $1.00; Richard Goss, $3.00	4.00
John W. Chandler, 3 Notes and Int. from date	600.00
" " " 1 Note Int. after July 4, 1829	248.00
Dr. Luther Jewett acct., balance due	16.15
Ann Chickery acct., balance due after deducting $48.00	30.00
Mabel Worster acct., allowed at $111.00 and settled by offset on Note	
	$1088.01

LUTHER CLARK
JOSEPH ARMINGTON } *Commissioners.*
LEVI P. PARKS.

Caledonia District, ss.

In Probate Court, April 21st., 1829, rec'd. ex'd. allowed and ordered to be recorded.

BENJ. F. DEMING, *Judge.*

¶ *Inventory*

Inventory of Jacob Benton's Estate, late of St. Johnsbury in the County of Caledonia, deceased, appraised on oath by us the subscribers duly appointed to that service by the Honorable Judge of Probate for Caledonia.

¶ *Wearing Apparel*

1 Hat $1.50.; 1 do., .25; 1 Surtout, $2.00	$3.75
1 Great coat, $5.00; 1 coat, $4.00	9.00
1 New coat, $4.00; 1 Old coat, .50	4.50
1 Old Great coat, $1.00; 2 pr. pants, $4.00	5.00
1 pr. old pantaloons	.25

3 old vests, .50; 2 new do. $2.00	2.50	JACOB BENTON 1766
1 Silk Vest, .50; 1 Cap, 50 c.	1.00	
1 pr. Gloves, 25 c; 2 pr. mittens, 25 c	.50	
4 pr. footings, 50 c; 1 pr. worsted Do. 40 c.	.90	
3 pr. Do. 40 c; 1 Belt, 50 c	.90	
1 pr. Suspenders, 25 c; 2 Hdks. $1.00	1.25	
3 cotton Hdks. 50 c; 1 linen shirt, 50 c	1.00	
9 Cotton Shirts	3.00	
2 shirtees, 25 c; 10 yds. cloth, $1.25	1.50	
6 White Cravats, 50 c; 1 Hdk. 50 c	1.00	
1 Shaving glass box, Razor, and Strap	.75	
1 pr. old boots, 75 c; 1 pr. old shoes, $1.00	1.75	
1 Hdk. 13 c; 1 pr. old saddle bags, $1.50	1.63	
1 Waiter, 50 c; 8 bags, $4.00	4.50	
12 Dining chairs, $9.00	9.00	
2 3½ f. Tables	5.50	
2 Stands, $2.00; 1 old Razor and strap, .75 c	2.75	
1 old Trunk, 50 c; 2 chests, $2.00	2.50	
Pocket book, 0.75; 1 pr. D. S. Mittens, .25	1.00	
1 pr. Silver Sleeve Buttons	.20	
1 Stove, $20.00; 1 Spider, 0.50	20.50	
1 dish kettle, $1.00; Iron Bason, .34	1.34	
1 Kettle, .25; 4 old chairs, $1.00	1.25	
Looking Glass, $1.50; Clock, $10.00	11.50	
1 Brass Kettle, $7.50; 20 pans, $1.00	8.50	
1 Cheese Press, $1.25; 2 tin pails, .50	1.75	
2 tubs, 75 c; 1 churn, 34 c	1.09	
1 pail, 25 c; 2 Do. 34 c	.59	
1 coffee pot, 20 c; 3 cream pots, 25 c	.45	
3 trays, 50 c; Jug, 8 c; lanthorn, .12	.70	
1 sad iron, 33 c; Tongs, 75 c	1.08	
1 pr. fire dogs	1.00	
	$114.88	
1 salt mortar, 25 c; Decanter, .34	$ .59	
1 sett Tea ware, $2.00; Glass salt, .13	2.13	
2 tumblers, 20 c; 1 Creamer, 8 c	.28	
1 Mug, 20 c; 3 bottles, 40 c	.60	
1 Large Bible, $4.00; 1 Do. 40 c	4.40	

JACOB BENTON 1766	Thompson's Seasons, 20 c; Hymn Book, 50 c Milton's Works, 20 c		.90
	Young's Thoughts		.23
	2 old Books, 25 c; 1 Loom, $4.00		4.25
	1 Saddle, $15.00; 1 Do. $7.00		22.00
	3 baskets, 75 c; 24½ rolls, $10.00		10.75
	1 Great Wheel		1.25
	1 check'd. Blanket		2.00
	1 Feather bed and pillows		7.50
	1 Coverlid		2.50
	2 Woollen Shirts, $3.00		3.00
	1 Bedstead & Cord		2.00
	30 lbs. yarn, $15.00; Old bed, $4.00		19.00
	1 Good feather bed, 2 pillows, Coverlid, Blanket, 3 shirts, Bedstead, cord, and under bed		13.00
	2 Meat Tubs, $2.00; 4½ bbls., $1.00		3.00
	1 Old BBl. 50 c; Keg, .25		.75
	1 Keg, 17 c; 2 Tubs Butter 90 lbs., $10.00		10.17
	Lot cheese, say 400 lbs.		25.00
	1 Sow and 5 pigs		24.00
	2 hogs, $28.00; 1 Wagon, $30.00		58.00
	1 M. long shingles		6.00
	100 sap Buckets		10.00
	1 Cutter, $10.00; 2 Buffaloes, $8.00		18.00
	Collar, traces, & Whiffletrees		1.50
	1 Halter & Bridle		.50
	1 Harness		10.00
	1 Old Scythe		.50
	3 old ploughs		10.00
		$273.80	
	3 pitch forks		$1.00
	2 chains, $4.00; 2 Oxen, $60.00		64.00
	1 2 yr. old heifer		15.00
	3 Yearlings		23.00
	5 Cows, $65.00; 1 Do., $17.00		82.00
	2 2 yr. olds, $14.00; 2 calves, $7.00		21.00
	1 Mare, $60.00; 1 Yearling colt, $27.00		87.00

1 2 year old colt, $35.00; 1 Sucking Colt, $20.00		JACOB
24 sheep, $25.00	80.00	BENTON
1 grindstone and crank	4.00	1766
2 store tubs, $2.00; 2 Tierces, $1.00	3.00	
1 Sett measures	1.00	
2½ bu. Flaxseed	2.50	
1 Blbl., 50 c; 1 Crow bar, $2.00	2.50	
1 Shovel, $0.75; 3 Axes, $1.00	1.75	
2 old Scythes, &c., $2.00; 1 Broad axe, $1.50	3.50	
5 Augurs, $1.00; 2 Sickles, 50 c	1.50	
3 chisels, 50 c; 1 Shave, 50 c	1.00	
1 Iron sq., 50 c; 1 pr. compasses, 10 c	.60	
Hoe, 20 c; 1 Old bridle, 25 c	.45	
2 old soap bbls. and Soap	6.00	
4 rakes, 50 c; 1 Harrow, $3.00	3.50	
25 tons hay, $100; 1 yoke and bow, $1.50	101.50	
1 cart, $7.00; 1 Water tub, 50 c	7.50	
	$513.30	
Cash, $40.71; 30 sheep and 9 lbs. Wool, $30.00; 60 bu. oats, $15.00	85.71	
Cash for Armington Note	90.00	
50 bu. Corn, $25.00; 13 Wheat, $17.34	42.34	
20 bu. Rye, $13.34; 100 Potatoes, $12.50	25.84	
1 Coverlid, $5.00; 6 yds. Table Cloth, $1.00	6.00	
2 Hammers, 60 c; 1 Linen Wheel, $1.50	2.10	
1 Saw, 50 c; 2 tow sheets, $2.00	2.50	
3 woolen Sheets, $4.50; 3 full'd Blankets, $6.00; 2 checked do., $4.50	15.00	
Brought forward $114.88 & $273.80	$388.68	
Farm appraised at	$2200.00	
	$3371.47	

¶ *Notes and Demands*

1 Note Russell & Davis, April 4, 1828	$275.00
1 " Eben Farnum, Oct. 16, '26	30.62
1 " B. Fuller, Dec. 17, '27, bal.	1.32
1 " Euph. & Jas. Ramsey, due 3136 f. hemlock boards	9.40

JACOB BENTON 1766	1 Note Hollis Roberts, Mar. 1, '27, Int. paid to Feb. 9, 1829	25.90
	1 " Do. same date Int. paid to Feb. 9, 1829	80.00
	Order on Town Treasurer	0.75
	Demands vs. Town St. Johnsbury	4.13
	1 Note D. Smith	7.22
	1 " A. Gilchrist, due	16.11
	1 " R. Goss, Otis Goss & Lena Goss, due Feb. 9, 1829	59.72
	1 Note Clark Cushman, due Nov. 1828	523.48
	1 " Mabel Worster, April 21, 1827, settled by Off-set.	
	1 Note Adam Duncan, July 30, 1827, no interest reckoned on this	5.89
	1 Note Hollis Roberts	4.05
	1 " James Ramsey, for 1 Wheel	2.50
	Int. on the above to Nov. 28	13.28
	Amt. brought up	3371.47
		$4430.84
	50 bu. corn more	25.00
		$4455.84
	Deduct Farnum note and interest	34.38
		$4421.46

JOSEPH ARMINGTON,
LUTHER CLARK.
LEVI P. PARKS. } *Coms.*

CALEDONIA ss.
In Probate Court, Ap. 21, 1829.
Rec'd. ex'd. allowed and ordered to be recorded.
BENJ. F. DEMING,
Judge.

I have several original letters of Jacob Benton and this is a facsimile of his signature to one written May 12, 1817.

JACOB BENTON 1766

The following letter to his brother-in-law, Silas Gridley, shows that he had decided opinions and did not hesitate to express them.

Waterford 30th Decr, 1817

Mr. Gridley,

SIR: I was not much more fortunate in the passage of your letter than you had been in receiving mine which you notice the receipt of. I did not receive it untill the 27th Instant there was written on it (Missent forward) and that mistake I think was made in the Post Office at Harwinton as the postage marked upon it should carry it 400 miles, the letter I refer to was under date of Sept. 30th. I was so unwell in Sept. as to consent to send for a Doctor but recovered without one and at present never enjoyed better health except a little of the Rheumatism. It is the most universally healthy in these parts that I have ever known it to be. Sir you inform me that you had heard nothing from Gill or Alstead Nath'l Kingsbury came up here about the first of July and brought Hannah with him. In addition to her wit, beauty & other accomplishments she brought Bag & baggage, though I believe neither of them had much use for money bags while here. Sam'ls wife projected a scheme went with Nath. and introduced her to Canada. She has not yet returned though her frequent letters promise it soon. Nath'l I think did not return from the Southward till June. I could not learn much from him about his profits. I believe it proved much like their other enterprizes, cost more than it came to.

Nath'l wrote to his uncle Sam this fall that he wished to come up here and take a school. Sam'l engaged one for him sent him a letter and have heard no more from him. I have been at Alstead and staid 20 days from the 18th of October

JACOB BENTON 1766

All well there. Sister Worster had been at Gill the week before. Nath'l was attending the Academy at Chesterfield. She thought them poor, embarrassed in debt and that they must sell before long. She had sold off a portion of her own farm last spring, had kept Ralph with her and seemed to have much confidence in him (Ezekiel XIXth 5th.) I believe she was better provided for with the necessaries of subsistence than she had been for some years before. Arad was on the point of removing away to Middlesex in Vermont where David Watts lives. Speed to the measure may he long continue as far detached from his mother. Sally worked out most of the time & Ann did same. Her granddaughter Sawyer discovers much of her Sawyer innate propensity, that of a depraved vicious romp with but little of correction or cultivation or likely to receive it there. I left Alstead (Slades) the 10th Nov. there has been snow on the highlands here about 6 weeks but on account of the thaws that have come there is but little yet on the open land. There is no news of importance here, this however: that vicious old Harridan (alias) mother Prouty remains here has a house fixt up near Sam's and it seems likely they may long enjoy the benefit of her. The season past has in general produced abundant crops except Indian corn, which was but trifling on uplands here and grass but a moderate crop Cattle have been very high in price and continue so yet. I conclude cousin Salmon's situation will be more agreeable to —— whom it may concern than some other stations he has occupied Neither yourself nor Lyman have let slip one hint respecting your wife nor Nim so I feel under no responsibility to give you any account of mine.

Your uncle Sam'l has lost nothing of his propensity for making winter voyages. he has pursued it for two years much to his disadvantage. But like an unlucky gamester with loss upon loss pursues the game to retrieve former losses. I would have written to you from Alstead had I received your letter seasonable, the detention of mine I cannot account for. I did not expect to have visited Alstead when I did, but I was diverted from my first purpose and returned. I would pay the postage on my frivolous letters were it not that I think they would be more likely to be neglected in some Post Offices.

If you should receive this in any season and will write to me again please to put on the direction in (Caledonia County) for the other I think has been sent by Bennington and to Waterbury in this State. Such mistakes the Post Master here informs me has been made between these two towns their names some similar, ... ought to be sent by way of Hartford. JACOB BENTON 1766

I have not much more room to write but I must not forget the due regards I owe to your Father and Mother, Brothers and others Lyman has intimated something in his writing that favoured a little of reflection but as I am not certain what he alludes to I shall not comment on it. So Adieu Sir, I believe you will think it enough unless it were better. I remain, sincerely yours &c.

JACOB BENTON.

Reynold Benton

1768(?)–1811

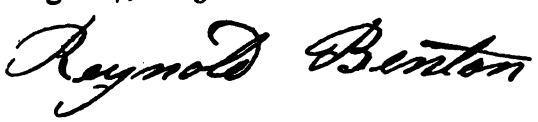
Reynold Benton

1768(?)–1811

REYNOLD BENTON, born probably in 1768, was with his father's family in Alstead, New Hampshire, in 1783, at the age of about fourteen years. The next information I have of him is found in a letter from his father, July 29, 1791, when Reynold was about twenty-four, which shows that he was then in some business in Hartford. It does not appear why he went to Hartford, but I think he went back when he became of age, possibly before, and went to sea. In September, 1802, his father wrote to him at Hartford to know whether he "intended to go to sea that fall," and in a letter by his father in 1804 he states that "Reynold came home from sea" the previous summer.

He married Huldah Clark probably about 1792 or 1793, and they lived at Hartford until his death in March, 1811.

The tradition in the family is that Reynold Benton was a very large, powerful man, and my father has told me of the feats of strength which he used to hear in his boyhood were performed by his Uncle Reynold. He seems to have been a man of good disposition and character, and respected, but to have been unfortunate in business matters. He lost his health and property, and died March 20, 1811, of consumption at the age of forty-three, leaving his wife and six children entirely destitute. He was buried in the South Burying Ground at Hartford, March 21, 1811, "Parson Flint officiating," as his brother Jacob wrote in a letter I now have. This is a facsimile of the signature of Reynold Benton to a letter in my possession written August 7, 1803.



His wife was evidently a superior woman. I have letters written by her in 1819, indicating that she was of good edu-

REYNOLD BENTON 1768

cation and capacity, and was striving very hard to educate her girls. She speaks of sending her daughter Hannah, who was then with her aunt, Elizabeth Gridley of Harwinton, to the Litchfield Academy, and says at the same time that Jane was living in the family of Parson Flint of the Second Church. She remained a widow and died at the age of seventy-nine. This is a facsimile of her signature to a letter in my possession written July 28, 1819.

Reynold and Huldah (Clark) Benton had six children, all born in Hartford: Jane, Emily, George, Charles, Henry, and Hannah E. Their names are thus given by Charles in a letter which I have, written in 1867, when he and Hannah E. were the only ones living and I believe this was the order of their births.

JANE lived as a girl in the family of Rev. Abel Flint, pastor of the Second Church, and the record of that church (*ante*, p. 37) and the inscription on her gravestone in the Old South Church yard show that she died unmarried May 9, 1824, aged thirty years, which makes her birth to have been in 1794.

EMILY married Roderick Seymour, of Hartford, in the Second Church, September 8, 1816 (*ante*, p. 36). They were both living in Rochester, New York, in July, 1831.

GEORGE married and, as I am informed, had two daughters. In August, 1831, he lived in Troy, New York.

CHARLES was born March 26, 1801. He wrote me in 1882 of his life. He said that when his father died he was ten years old and his Uncle Jacob, who was at the funeral, wished to take him to Vermont and bring him up, but his mother was unwilling because Vermont was so far away. He was then "put out to a farmer about four miles from Hartford," and when he was fourteen he "was apprenticed to C. Nichols for seven years to learn the soap and candle business for $30 a year." When he was twenty-one he was forty-five dollars in debt, which he "worked out." He then went to Rochester, New York, as he said, "without money or friends." June 2, 1825, he married Mary Church, daughter of James and Mary (Wads-

worth) Church, of Hartford, where she was born August 24, 1800. He lived at Rochester until 1838, and had five children born there:— REYNOLD BENTON 1768

William Rochester, born January 16, 1827; died May 13, 1829, at Hartford.

Charles Prior, born April 21, 1830.

Emily Nichols, born February 1, 1832.

Jane, born July 17, 1835; died May 4, 1836, at Rochester.

Mary Church, born July 27, 1837; died September 17, 1864, at Hartford.

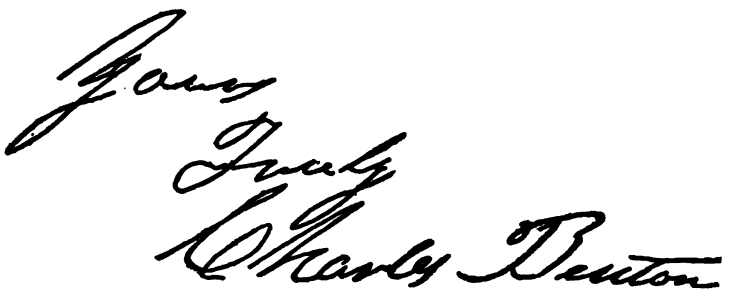
In the spring of 1838, he returned to Hartford and lived there until his death. He had two children born in Hartford:—

Charlotte W., born January 31, 1840; died January 13, 1841.

Mariah Huldah, born April 18, 1844.

Mary, the wife of Charles Benton, died at Hartford, November 10, 1870, and he afterwards married Amanda Thompson, a widow, who survived him, but died May 12, 1889.

He was an enterprising man of great energy and persistence. He was successful in the accumulation of property, and continued in business until 1876, when he was seventy-five years old, and was chosen president of the Hartford and New York Steamboat Company, and retired from business. He was a member of the Court of Common Council of Hartford in 1861, and in 1862 was mayor of the city. (*Hist. Hartford County*, Vol. I. p. 385.) He died December 18, 1886, at the age of eighty-five. The following is a facsimile of his signature to the letter referred to above.



HENRY was born May 4, 1803, at Hartford. He married

REYNOLD BENTON 1768

Jane J. Sedgwick of Hartford, October 7, 1824. They had seven children, all born at Hartford:—

Jane M., born July 3, 1825; died October 1, 1832.
Martha A., born August 29, 1827; died April 15, 1828.
Mary A., born May 7, 1829; died October 20, 1829.
Harriet E., born June 28, 1831; died October 11, 1832.
Sarah Jane, born August 15, 1833; died July 10, 1894.
Frances Amelia, born October 17, 1836.
Frederick Henry, born May 6, 1838.

Jane (Sedgwick) Benton, wife of Henry Benton, died April 5, 1843, at Hartford, and October 16, 1843, he married Mary Griswold of Hartford. There were no children by this marriage. She died, and January 10, 1856, he married Katherine Derby of Hartford. There were two children by this marriage, both born at Hartford:—

Thomas Henry Seymour, born October 12, 1858.
Jane Emily, born October 12, 1860.

Henry Benton lived all his life in Hartford, and died there July 12, 1863.

HANNAH E., the youngest child of Reynold Benton, married George Walker, and they were living in Rochester, New York, in July, 1831. In 1867 her brother Charles wrote that she was then a widow living with her children in the city of New York.

Charles Prior Benton, the only son of Charles Benton, and grandson of Reynold Benton, who grew up, never married, and now lives at Cleveland, Ohio.

Emily Nichols, daughter of Charles Benton, married Hezekiah Gaylord of Hartford, March 7, 1856, and they had one daughter and four sons.

Mariah Huldah, daughter of Charles Benton, married Allan W. Warner of East Haddam, as I am informed.

Sarah Jane, daughter of Henry and granddaughter of Reynold Benton, married Ezra Gleason of Halifax, Vermont, September 3, 1850. Her sister, Frances Amelia, married Edward N. Gleason, brother of Ezra, September 22, 1851.

Frederick Henry Benton, son of Henry Benton, married Eliza Burr of Hartford, January 20, 1857. She died and he married again August 10, 1889.

Jane Emily Benton, the youngest daughter of Henry Benton, is now living in Boston, unmarried. REYNOLD BENTON 1768

Thomas Henry Seymour Benton, youngest son of Henry and grandson of Reynold Benton, married Catherine Kelleher, daughter of Michael and Catherine (Sheridan) Kelleher, at New Haven, November 23, 1889. They had two children:—

Thomas H., born September 7, 1891; died September 20, 1891.

Francis F., born October 24, 1892; died December 8, 1893.

She died November 20, 1896, and April 30, 1900, he married Catherine A., daughter of William and Johanna (Purtil) Healey, of Albany, New York, at Naugatuck, Connecticut, where they are now living. He is Judge of Probate for the District of Naugatuck.

Chauncey Benton

1770–1833

Chauncey Benton

1770–1833

CHAUNCEY BENTON, born August 1, 1770, did not go to Alstead, New Hampshire, with his father's family in 1782. He was then a boy of twelve, and may have been left in Harwinton, with his sister Elizabeth Gridley, who had then but one child. The first information I have of him is in a letter written by him to his sister Elizabeth, February 9, 1791, from Cornwall, Vermont, in which he says that he has lived in Cornwall almost seven years. This shows that he went there about 1785, when he was fourteen or fifteen years old, and two or three years after his father went to Alstead. Cornwall was settled about that time, the church being organized July 15, 1785, by settlers from Litchfield County, Connecticut. Harwinton was in this county, and there were several Bentons among the first proprietors or settlers. I think some of them were probably related to Chauncey's father, and that the boy was sent with them to live.

I do not know when he left Cornwall, but he returned to Hartford before 1797 and married Betsey Bidwell in the Second Church, June 18, 1797. They lived at Hartford until his death, August 17, 1833.

His wife was born May 22, 1768, and died October 15, 1839. They had six children, all born in Hartford:—

CHAUNCEY, born October 23, 1798.

FANNY, born February 20, 1800; died November 13, 1870.

WILLIAM, born October 25, 1801; died January, 1892, at Windsor, Connecticut.

HANNAH, born January 26, 1803; died January 26, 1803.

ANN Y., born February 22, 1805.

JAMES SLADE, born June 22, 1808; died February 1, 1871.

Chauncey is said to have married, but had no children who grew up.

CHAUNCEY BENTON 1770

Fanny married Daniel Fish May 9, 1820. He was born September 3, 1796.

William married Eliza Allen of Windsor, but they had no children that grew up.

Ann Y. married William Cadwell, and they had two children, William and Eliza. She is said to have died in one of the Western States.

James Slade, the youngest child of Chauncey Benton, married Amanda Ackley, daughter of John and Mary (Ackley) Flint of Wethersfield, Connecticut, where she was born December 1, 1811. I have not the date of this marriage, but it was probably in 1834. They had four children, born at Rockyhill, Connecticut:—

James Chauncey, born March 28, 1835; died May, 1869, at Rockyhill.

Fanny Maria, born March 31, 1836; died in 1899 at Hartford.

William Henry, born in June, 1837.

George, born in September, 1839; died in 1865 at Rockyhill.

They also had two children born at Hartford:—

Charles Francis, born in August, 1845.

Ann Amanda, born in June, 1847; died in August, 1849, at Hartford.

James Chauncey married Wealthy Peck of Hartford, and they had one daughter, who died young.

William Henry was living in Springfield, Massachusetts, in 1898, and had no children.

Charles Francis is unmarried, and lives in Hartford.

Fanny Maria, who is now living, as I am informed, in Florida, married at Rockyhill Lambert Wesley Smith of Hartford. They had three children, William and Mary, who both died young, and Eva A., born in 1860, who married a Daniels of Hartford, where he died about 1896.

Chauncey Benton does not appear to have been a land-owner in Hartford and I think he had some mechanical occupation. He did not accumulate property, but appears to have been poor all his life. He is said to have been very eccentric, and the following letter which I have, written when he was nineteen, shows that he was even then quite peculiar.

1 HONOURED FRIENDS BROTHERS AND SISTER MY UNWORTHY AND DUTIFTUL RESPECTS TO YOU. CHAUNCEY BENTON 1770

2 It is with the Greatest Pleasure that I Set Down to Let you know that I am in A good State of health at present as Can be Expected

3 It was with Great pleasure as well as unexpected that I Received your Letters by the hand of Mr. Johnson on February the 1 Being very glad to hear from you once more

4 Mr. Johnson Could not wait for a letter & was not A going to return This way So I Can not Answer you by Him but I Expect to send by another MAN

5 I have Lived in this town Almost 7 years & neither My Father nor Mother Brother nor Sister has taken Pains to Come & See me but I Should be happy To wait on you Here.

6 If you go to the Onion river you Will Come this way & you must inquire & Call & See how poor people Live.

7 My great Distance & long absence from you tho' I have not wanted for good Company makes me very solicitous Concerning your welfare Natural affection inclines me Strongly to have you in Remembrance

8 For the invitation of Comeing to See you I give you thank I Shall as quick as I am able but you no the destruction of poor is their poverty & the destruction of the damned is their deviltry Amen
Selah

9 I am verry much Obliged to you for the Letter you Sent me And I hope this Will be A Greeable return To All friends

CHAUNCEY BENTON 1770

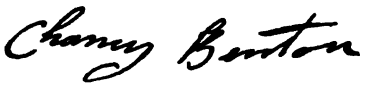
10 I am Afraid of wearying your patience So I conclude by wishing you to write to me & Wishing God's blessing Rest on you Forever

11 So I remain your unworthy & Aflicted friend Chancy Benton — Chancy Benton

12 CHANCY BENTON — *Cornwall Feby th 9th* 1791

13 to SILAS GRIDLEY & ELISABETH & REYNOLD BENTON.

This letter is divided into numbered spaces as printed above, and the following is a facsimile of his signature to the letter.



I think he and his wife were both members of the Second Church in Hartford.

Mary Benton

1772–1841

Mary Benton

1772–1841

MARY, born September 18, 1772, married Samuel Kingsbury at Alstead, New Hampshire, June 3, 1789. They were married by a justice of the peace, there being then no minister in Alstead. The record is—"Alstead June 3. 1789 The Bands of Matrimony solemnized between Sam^{el} Kingsbery of Alstead & Mary Benton of Rockingham state of Vermont per Nath^{el} Sartel Prentice Justice peace." She died at Amherst, Massachusetts, June 19, 1841. Samuel Kingsbury, her husband, was born at Tolland, Connecticut, February 2, 1763, and died at Amherst, September 27, 1851. They are both buried in Amherst, and the inscription upon the tombstone is "Deacon Samuel Kingsbury and wife." Samuel Kingsbury was the youngest child of Nathaniel Kingsbury and Sarah (Chapman) Kingsbury. His father was the son of Nathaniel and Hannah Kingsbury of Coventry, Connecticut, and was born in Coventry, September 8, 1711. He settled in Tolland about the time of his marriage, March 16, 1737, on land given to him by his father-in-law, Captain Samuel Chapman, who settled in Tolland about the year 1725. Samuel Kingsbury had three sisters and two brothers, one of whom, Jabez, lived on the farm in Tolland until his death in 1844, when it passed to his descendants, who, I am informed, still continue to live upon it. Jabez was for many years deacon of the Congregational Church in Tolland, as was his father, Nathaniel, before him. (*Early History of Tolland*, p. 65.)

The record of the family of Samuel and Mary (Benton) Kingsbury in their family Bible, which I have, is as follows:—

"SAMUEL KINGSBERY was born at Tolland in Connecticut the 2 of Febbruary 1763. MARY BENTON was born in Harwinton Connecticut the 18th of September 1772. Samuel Kingsbery Removed to Alstead Newhampshire the 23 of April 1784 & was married to mary Benton the 3 of June 1789. Samuel Kingsbery Removed to Langdon the 12 of

MARY BENTON 1772

January 1795 & Removed back to Alstead the 1st of May 1802. Samuel Kingsbery Removed to Barnardstone 28th of March 1811. Samuel Kingsbery Removed to Gill the 9th of November 1812. Samuel Kingsbery Removed to Greenfield monday 6 of April 1818. Sam[l] Kingsbery Removed to Shutesbury Wednesday 28 of April 1819. Sam[l] Kingsbery removed to Amherst thursday 18th of Aprill 1822 Colonel Dickinson's house East Street. Sam[l] Kingsbery removed Mis Dickinsons House west Street 19 of April 1824, monday 11 of April 1826. S Kingsbery Removed into the Coleman house. 12 of April 1832, S. Kingsbery Removed into the Parsons house. April 12 1834, S K Removed in to the house I Bought of Boltwood."

¶ *Births.*

HANNAH KINGSBERY born the 17th of March 1790, at Alstead.
BETSY KINGSBERY born the 14th of August 1791, at Alstead.
CANDACE KINGSBERY born the 31st of January 1794, at Alstead.
NATANIEL KINGSBERY born the 9th of April 1796, at Langdon.
SAMUEL KINGSBERY born the 24th of May 1798, at Langdon.
ENOCH KINGSBERY born the 21st of April 1800, at Langdon.
IRA KINGSBERY born the 20th of September 1802, at Alstead.
MARY KINGSBERY born the 13th of April 1804, at Alstead.
BENJAMIN KINGSBERY born the 28th of May 1806, at Alstead.
CARROLINE KINGSBERY born the 11th Febbruary 1808, at Alstead.
LYMAN KINGSBERY born the 26th of November, 1810, at Alstead.
ANNA MARIA KINGSBERY born 4th of May 1813, at Gill.

¶ *Deaths.*

IRA KINGSBERY dyed the 17th of May 1803.
BENJAMIN KINGSBERY died the 2d of June 1806.
CARROLINE KINGSBERY dyed the 12th of April 1810.
CANDACE MILLER K. dyed July 3d 1840.

MARY BENTON 1772

Eunice Kingsbury dyed July 22 1840.
Mary B. Kingsbury dyed June 19th 1841.
Betsy K. Gilbert dyed July 31st, 1841.
Nathaniel Kingsbury dyed July 12 1843 at Prairyvill wisconsin.
Samuel Kingsbury dyed Sept. 27th 1851.
Ann M. Merrill died Nov. 10th 1855.
Mary Kingsbury died Nov 8th 1856.
Samuel Kingsbury died March 5th 1866.
Enoch Kingsbury died Oct 26th 1868.
Hannah Kingsbury died Sept 5th 1871.
Lyman Kingsbury died Dec 4th 1874.

All of the foregoing record is in the handwriting of Deacon Kingsbury down to the record of the death of Candace Miller, July 3, 1840. It will be observed that he uniformly spelled the name Kings*bery*, and when the record is taken up in the handwriting of others it is spelled Kings*bury*. Eunice Kingsbury, who died July 22, 1840, was evidently a grandchild. The record taken together shows the births and deaths of the children of Samuel and Mary (Benton) Kingsbury as follows:—

Hannah, born March 17, 1790, at Alstead; died September 5, 1871.
Betsey, born August 14, 1791, at Alstead; died July 31, 1841.
Candace, born January 31, 1794, at Alstead; died July 3, 1840.
Nathaniel, born April 9, 1796, at Langdon; died July 12, 1843.
Samuel, born May 24, 1798, at Langdon; died March 5, 1866.
Enoch, born April 21, 1800, at Langdon; died October 26, 1868.
Ira, born September 20, 1802, at Alstead; died May 17, 1803.
Mary, born April 13, 1804, at Alstead; died November 8, 1856.
Benjamin, born May 28, 1806, at Alstead; died June 2, 1806.
Caroline, born February 11, 1808, at Alstead; died April 12, 1810.

MARY BENTON 1772

Lyman, born November 26, 1810, at Alstead; died December 4, 1874.

Anna Maria, born May 4, 1813, at Gill; died November 10, 1855.

Samuel and Mary (Benton) Kingsbury were both strict members of the Congregational Church, and he was for many years a deacon in that church, and was known as "Deacon Kingsbury." His son Enoch fitted for college at Amherst Academy, entered Amherst College in 1823, and graduated in 1827. He then became a Presbyterian minister, and about 1832 went to Danvers, Illinois, as a home missionary. Mary joined the First Church in Amherst, May, 1827. Betsey joined the same church in September, 1827. Hannah joined the same church July 1, 1838.

Lucius M. Boltwood of Grand Rapids, Michigan, who lived for many years in Amherst, remembers "Deacon Kingsbury" and his wife and family. He writes me: "The Kingsburys were very excellent godly people. Deacon Kingsbury was an 'old theology man,' and had no patience with new measures, or 'Taylorism.' They were all very plain people. There was a streak of oddity in the family, in which the father and mother and daughter Mary certainly shared. Deacon Kingsbury was afraid of the theological soundness of Prof. E. A. Park, then of Amherst College, who resided while at Amherst just across the street from him, with my grandmother, Mrs. Deborah Shepard. Professor Park's name on one occasion being mentioned in his presence, Deacon Kingsbury exclaimed, 'Oh, he is very unsound.' 'How so?' he was asked. 'Why,' said Deacon Kingsbury, 'he believes that man is a *moral* agent.' 'Well, don't you believe so?' asked his friend. 'No, indeed,' replied the good deacon, 'I believe that he is an *immoral* agent!'

"An aunt of mine said to Mary Kingsbury when calling on her on one Monday morning, 'Your father did not get out to church yesterday afternoon.' 'Get out,—he would have got out yesterday morning if he had been nearer the door (he sat then just under the pulpit); he does n't want to hear any more of that dum Taylorism!' was Miss Kingsbury's reply."

Taylorism was a phase of New England Calvinism, which derived its name from Dr. Taylor of New Haven, and was a modification of the earlier New England Calvinism. Dr. Taylor and his party insisted upon the real freedom of the will and a natural ability of moral choice, and made a distinction between depravity as a *tendency* to sin and sin itself. They claimed that sin was a *voluntary* choice of evil. In short, they insisted that man was a *moral* agent, and the difference between Taylorism and Tylerism, as the other view of the question was termed, was aptly stated by Deacon Kingsbury, when he said he did not believe that man was a moral agent, but that he was an *immoral* agent. A full discussion of this subject will be found in *The Catastrophe of the Presbyterian Church in* 1837, by Zebulon Crocker (New Haven, 1838). MARY BENTON 1772

The Kingsburys were all their lives in quite limited circumstances. He owned a small farm in Alstead, and appears to have owned their home in the various places where they lived, and he had a small amount of real estate when he died at Amherst. Their descendants are now very widely scattered, living in many States in the Union. The will of Deacon Kingsbury, written by him when he was eighty-two, is a model of simplicity. It is as follows:—

HAVING arived at an age more than is common, & knowin that infirmaties are increasing upon me, I think my mind is as clear as can be expected I knowing that soon I must leave this world think proper to write this as my last will & testament Viz: I give my sperit into the hand of him who gave it my body to buryed in a very plain & simple manner & my onest debts to be paid which are not many I think that lower lot of mine if sold for wht it is worth will more than pay them the house & the land where I live would giv to Hannah & Mary who have taken kind care of me & what remains of the land & other things after paying the debts I would have equally devided among children that are liveing & the heirs of them that are dead which will be but a little & further I do appoint Hannah as my Administratrix to all matters as shall best for the whole. In witness whereunto I

MARY BENTON 1772

have hereunto set my hand & seal the 12 day April in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and forty five. in presence of SAMUEL KINGSBURY *(Seal)*

David Parsons
William B. Reed
Edwin Douglass

Mary (Benton) Kingsbury was a large strong woman who bore twelve children within less than twenty-four years. Family letters show that she endured much privation and hard labor, but that she was brave and cheerful. She was plain and peculiar in speech, but hospitable and helpful and a most faithful and excellent wife and mother.

This is a facsimile of the signature of Mary (Benton) Kingsbury to a letter to her sister Elizabeth Gridley in 1808, which I now have.

Her husband, though in early life a farmer, was for many years a cooper and carriage-maker.

Samuel Slade Benton

1777–1857

Samuel Slade Benton

1777–1857

SAMUEL SLADE BENTON was the youngest child of Jacob Benton, Jr., and Hannah Slade Benton. I have not found any official record of the place and date of his birth, but the record in his family Bible is that he was born on April 22, 1777, at Harwinton, Connecticut, and the Harwinton Church records show that he was baptized in October, 1777. His first name was doubtless for his great-grandfather, Samuel, and the middle name for his mother's family. He had four brothers, Phinehas, Jacob, Reynold, and Chauncey, and four sisters, Elizabeth, Mary, Mabel, and Honnor, the last of whom died in infancy.

His father was born at Hartford, Connecticut, January 8, 1729. His grandfather, Jacob Benton, was one of the first settlers of Harwinton. His great-grandfather, Samuel Benton, Sr., of Hartford, was one of the original proprietors of Harwinton, and a son of Andrew Benton, who was one of the first settlers of Milford, Connecticut, in 1639. The first official record I have found referring to my grandfather is in the town record of Alstead, New Hampshire, March 26, 1783, where he is named as one of the children of Jacob and Hannah Benton in the "warning out" notice to them and their children, and he went to Rockingham with his father sometime between that time and March, 1786, probably as early as 1785. In a letter from his father to his sister Elizabeth, March 6, 1787, it is mentioned that "Samuel has bin sick," etc. Another letter, from Jacob Benton to his daughter, Mrs. Elizabeth Gridley, February 9, 1789, refers to Samuel as having been quite sick and "unfit to go to school for more than a month." He was then about twelve, and I believe from what he told me about how little schooling he had and what I have learned of the straitened circumstances of his parents at that time, that he was soon put to work, and worked in Walpole, New Hampshire, where his elder brother Jacob lived between

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1792 and 1795 or later, and in Langdon, New Hampshire, where the record of his marriage, January 10, 1802, states he then lived.

In a letter which I now have, dated October 5, 1801, his father writes: "Jacob and Samuel went up the River about 90 miles and bought each of them farms and Jacob came home in July, but stayed but a day or two. Samuel came home last week but stayed but one night." This shows that my grandfather first went to Waterford as early as the spring of 1801. November 10, 1801, he bought fifty acres of land (being one half of Lot 8, Third Range) in the town of Waterford, Vermont, for two hundred dollars. The following copy of the original plan of the allotment of Waterford, still existing, shows that the lot of which he bought one half was in the back part of the town. It was high, wooded land requiring much labor to clear and subdue for cultivation. On this lot he built a log house, to which in the winter of 1802, when he was twenty-four years old, he brought his young wife, Esther Prouty, then nineteen years old. They were married at Charlestown, New Hampshire, February 7, 1802. The town record in Charlestown gives date of publishing of intention of marriage as January 10, 1802, and the town history by Saunderson the date of marriage as January 25, 1802; but February 7, 1802, is the date in Samuel Slade Benton's family Bible, and is, I believe, the correct date. The town record spells the name "Easter," and Samuel S. Benton is stated to be "of Langdon."

Waterford was then a frontier settlement, with a population of between five and six hundred. It was incorporated November 8, 1780, as Littleton, and November 9, 1797, its name was changed to Waterford. The first settlement in the town was about 1783 or 1784. It was not organized as a town until May 6, 1793, and first sent a representative to the Assembly in 1795. About 1797 or a little later a Congregational Church was there organized and established. In 1791, it had sixty-three inhabitants, in 1800 five hundred and sixty-five, in 1810 twelve hundred and eighty-nine, and it afterwards became, as its native poet wrote:—

A very fine place
Adorned with majesty and grace

Upon the reproduction shown below of the Original Plan of Allotment of the town of Waterford, Vermont, one half of lot No. 8

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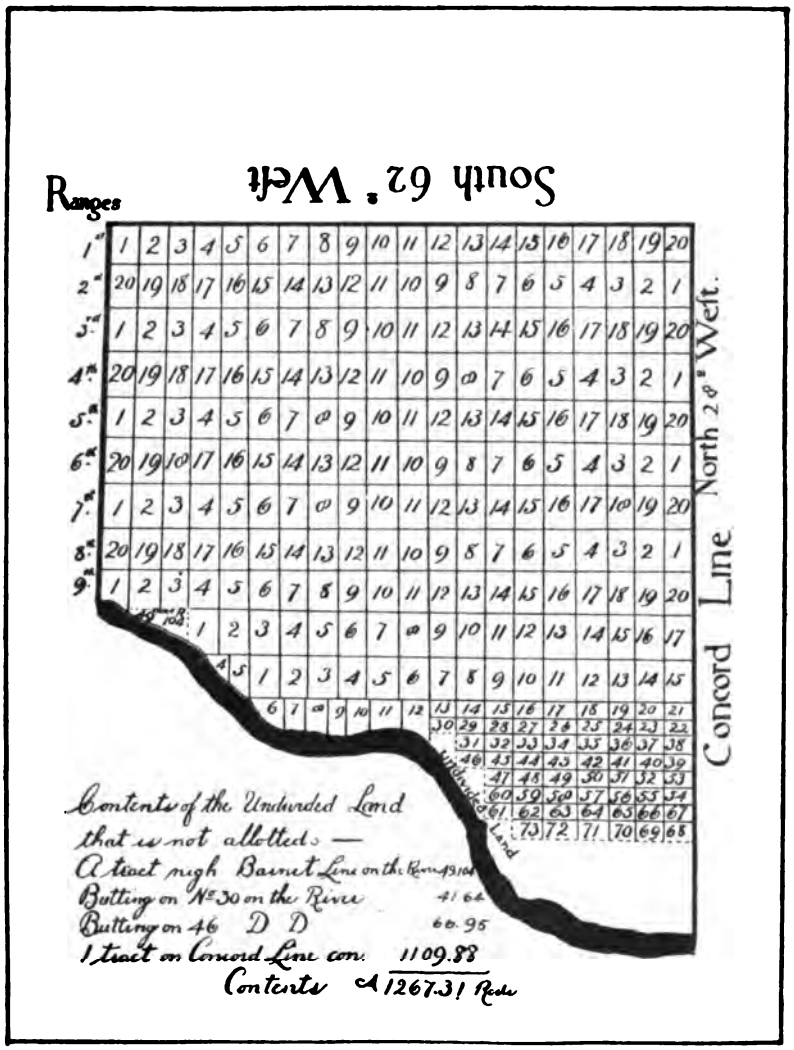
Ranges
South 62° West
Concord Line North 28° West.
Contents of the Undivided Land that is not allotted —
A tract nigh Barnet Line on the Rear
Butting on No 30 on the River 41.64
Butting on 46 D D 60.95
1 tract on Concord Line con: 1109.88
Contents 1267.31 Rods

in the Third Range, containing fifty acres, was bought by Samuel Slade Benton in 1801, *and the other half bought by him in* 1814.

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Situated under Rabbit Hill,
*With a tavern, store, and clover mill.**

The conditions of life when my grandfather settled in Waterford were very primitive. The people were all poor, and he doubtless was as poor as any, having practically nothing after he had paid for the fifty acres of wild land on which he settled.

When I was a boy, the year before he died, he was for some weeks at my father's house in Bradford, Vermont, and he told me something of his early circumstances. The log house which he built in 1801 had but one room, and when his first child was born, in November, 1802, he said he smoothed off the rough logs with his axe in one corner, and hung up blankets about that corner to shield his wife and the baby from the cold. At first he had no horse or oxen, but hired the use of an ox-team by laboring for a neighbor, and when he and one of his neighbors had each raised a young ox they put them together and did their work. My grandmother told me they even had no cow, and she hired the use of one from a neighbor and paid by spinning yarn. She used herself to go to the pasture and milk the cow, climbing the log fences of the clearings for that purpose.

My grandparents lived in Waterford until 1829, and twelve children were born to them there. One of these died in infancy, and the other eleven all grew up and married. My grandparents lived in the log house until about 1806 or 1807, their oldest daughter, Hannah, being born in it August 13, 1805. My grandfather then built a story-and-a-half frame house, in which he lived until 1829, when he removed to St. Johnsbury, Vermont, and sold his farm in Waterford to his oldest son, Reuben, who remodelled the house about 1834. All my grandparents' children, except Reuben and Hannah, the eldest son and daughter, were born in this house. In 1856, the farm which he cleared and occupied, and which was then and is now known as the "Benton Farm," was purchased by Stephen Richardson, who about 1866 removed the house a short distance from its original location, remodelled it again and made

* *A clover mill was a mill where clover seed was taken from the red clover. This was a profitable industry in some Vermont towns at one time.*

it a two-story white house with green blinds, in which his widow now lives (1900). SAMUEL SLADE BENTON 1777

May 27, 1814, my grandfather purchased for five hundred dollars the remaining half of the lot, half of which he had purchased in 1801 for two hundred dollars. In the meantime, April 18, 1810, he had purchased thirty acres of Lot 13 in the second Range, adjoining the one half of Lot 8 which he first purchased. For this he paid one hundred and fifty dollars. He was not inclined to make this purchase when the land was offered, as he had no money and would not run in debt; but my grandmother urged him to buy it, produced a little store of money which she had saved, "turned in," as the phrase at that time was, her best feather bed and blankets, all of which she had herself made, carding and spinning the wool and weaving the blankets, and a quantity of yarn which she had also spun. With these they made up the required amount and bought the thirty acres.

In May, 1814, when my grandfather bought the other half of Lot 8, he sold this thirty acres, half of Lot 13, for two hundred and twenty-five dollars, and this helped him pay the five hundred dollars for the other half of the original lot. April 21, 1821, he bought forty acres out of Lot No. 9 in the third Range for two hundred and seventy-five dollars. August 2, 1822, he bought Lot 13 in the fourth Range, containing one hundred acres, and adjoining his home lot in the third Range, for two hundred and seventy-five dollars, thus making his home farm consist of two hundred acres at a cost for the land of nine hundred and seventy-five dollars.

November 28, 1833, after he had removed to St. Johnsbury, he sold Lot 8 with the buildings to his son Reuben for one thousand dollars, and December 2, 1836, he sold Lot 13 to Reuben for four hundred dollars, thus making fourteen hundred dollars for the two hundred acres and buildings.

December 18, 1833, he bought the remaining sixty acres of Lot 9 in the third Range, and all of Lot 10 in the third Range, making one hundred and sixty acres, for seven hundred dollars. This gave him all of Lots 9 and 10 in the third Range, amounting to two hundred acres. April 11, 1840, he sold these two hundred acres for fifteen hundred dollars, to

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Willard Stoddard, who had married his eldest daughter, Hannah. He does not appear ever to have made a mortgage upon any real estate.

The only means of communication between Waterford and Boston or Portland, Maine, at that time was by teams, and my grandfather, as early as 1812, I think, began to drive in winter either down the Connecticut River to Boston, or through the White Mountain Notch to Portland, carrying produce and bringing back supplies for the country traders. This was not uniformly profitable, as appears by a letter from his brother Jacob in 1817, in which he says: "Samuel has lost nothing of his propensity for making winter voyages. He has pursued it for two years much to his disadvantage. But like an unlucky gamester, with loss upon loss pursues the game to retrieve former losses." He drove his own four-horse team on these expeditions for many years, and thus sought to add to his scanty income from his farm. It was not easy work, and was attended with much privation. He once told me that he had taken to Boston a quantity of pork raised on the farm, and received his pay for it in silver dollars amounting, I think, to about fifty or sixty dollars, which he intended to apply to a payment for land which he had bought. He said that in order to be sure he should not lose this money, or have it stolen, he put it in the bottom of a large box of salt, which he was carrying with other supplies from Boston to Waterford. On the last day of the trip, when he expected to reach home in the early evening, he met a severe snow-storm, which had so blocked the roads that finally he found it impossible to get through and had to leave his sled with its load, unhitch his horses and make his way through the drifts with them. He then remembered that he had left his bag of money. He told me that he thought best not to mention this to his wife. He said that he thought nobody knew where the money was, and that it would be as difficult for anybody to get at it during the night as it had been for him to get away from it, and he therefore went to bed and slept, and the next morning he returned, digging his way through the snow, and found his load and money untouched.

In 1822, my grandfather's oldest brother, Jacob, who went

to Waterford with him in 1801, and never married, but lived most of the time thereafter in Waterford, went to St. Johnsbury, and bought what was then known as the "Lord Farm," on the Passumpsic River. This place was afterwards known as "Benton's Meadows," and is so spoken of in Hayward's Gazetteer of Vermont, published in 1849. Jacob Benton lived on this farm until his death in 1828, when my grandfather was appointed administrator of his estate, and in 1829 he purchased the interests of the other heirs in the farm and moved to St. Johnsbury with his family to live. SAMUEL SLADE BENTON 1777

At that time my grandfather had eleven children, the oldest of whom, Reuben Clark, was twenty-seven years old and married, and I think also lived in St. Johnsbury; Hannah, who was twenty-four and married to Willard Stoddard, and lived in Waterford; Samuel, who was twenty-two, and preparing for college; Esther, who was twenty-one, and Mary, twenty, who were living at home but attending the Essex County Grammar School and teaching a portion of the time; Jacob, who was eighteen; Elizabeth, sixteen; Josiah, thirteen; Susan, eleven; William, six; and Charles, four years of age, all of whom were at home and went with their father to St. Johnsbury.

The other heirs of his brother Jacob were his brother Chauncey and his sister Mabel Worster, and the children of his sister Elizabeth Gridley, his sister Mary Kingsbury, and his brother Reynold. They conveyed their shares in the land to him in the years 1829, 1831, for four hundred dollars a share, making two thousand dollars in all. At that time he paid his sister Mary, and I think his brother Chauncey, and probably gave his notes, or was trusted without notes by the other heirs.

He had not then sold any of his real estate in Waterford. April 28, 1832, he sold ninety acres of the Jacob Benton farm, that is, of "Benton's Meadows," on both sides of the Passumpsic River, to his son Reuben for a thousand dollars. But there was almost an absolute lack of ready money in that part of the country at that time, and he apparently had great difficulty in meeting the remaining payments. In March, 1833, he wrote to his nephew, Joel Gridley, that he was hav-

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ing hard work to pay, as Reuben could not pay him fast enough to meet the calls of the heirs, and said that he had tried to sell some of his land but could not. Some of the payments were apparently delayed until nearly 1840, but finally he succeeded in paying all the heirs in full.

He lived on this farm in St. Johnsbury until July, 1841, when he sold the farm for five thousand dollars, then considered a very large price, to the Messrs. Fairbanks, and they afterwards erected upon it their scale factory. October 22, in the same year, he bought a large farm on the river road in the south part of Lancaster, New Hampshire, of one Lucas, and went to Lancaster to reside, in October, 1842. I presume he went to Lancaster because his son Jacob, who was a lawyer, then lived there. I have heard of no other reason why he selected that place. In 1845, he bought a small farm on the river road about half a mile north of the South Newbury railroad station in Newbury, Vermont, of his son-in-law, Elisha Kinney, for fourteen hundred dollars. In 1847, he sold the Lancaster farm and moved to the Newbury place, where he lived until his death, December 15, 1857.

He appears to have acquired property in Waterford, slowly but surely. He was first taxed there in 1803 for three cattle; in 1804 for four cattle and one sheep, and in 1806 he was taxed for a horse and for five cattle and two acres of improved land. Land was then subject to local taxation only when improved so far as to be cultivated. He was first taxed for two oxen in 1808, and in 1810 he was taxed for two oxen, six cattle, one horse, and a watch, and seven acres of improved land. In 1812 he was taxed for two horses, eight cattle, and ten acres of improved land; in 1821, for two oxen, twelve cattle, two horses, and sixty acres of improved land; in 1824, for four oxen, fourteen cattle, two horses, and sixty acres of improved land, and in 1827, for two oxen, twenty-three cattle, two horses, twenty-eight sheep, and sixty-five acres of improved land. While he lived in Waterford he does not appear to have taken any particular interest in town affairs, although he served as grand juryman, surveyor of highways, collector of taxes, trustee of schools, and filled other minor offices in the town in the years 1808, 1809, 1814, 1815, 1817, 1820,

1822, 1827, and 1829. He held no office in St. Johnsbury, Lancaster, or Newbury. SAMUEL SLADE BENTON 1777

In 1842 he was taxed in Lancaster, New Hampshire, for two hundred and nine acres of land, twenty-eight hundred dollars; two horses, seventy dollars; two oxen, forty-two dollars; eight cows, one hundred and twenty-four dollars; five head of other cattle, fifty dollars; twenty-six sheep, forty dollars; and in 1847 he was taxed on his homestead of two hundred and eighteen acres, twenty-eight hundred dollars; eighteen cattle, two hundred and twenty-two dollars; forty sheep, forty-four dollars; and a carriage, one hundred and twenty dollars. I remember this carriage. It was an old-fashioned thorough-brace chaise, quite expensive for that part of the country, and an object of admiration to me when, as a child, I visited my grandfather and grandmother at Newbury, I should say in 1848. I remember being told by my grandmother if I would be a good boy grandfather would take me to ride in the chaise. In Newbury he was first taxed in 1847 for forty acres of land and buildings at twelve hundred dollars, and in 1856 he was assessed for the same property with the addition of nine hundred and six dollars for personal property. In 1856 he sold the Newbury farm to his youngest son, Charles E., who lived with him, for two thousand dollars, but continued to reside with his son on the place until his death in 1857.

My grandfather left no will, and his sons, Jacob and Charles, were appointed administrators, and administered the personal estate, which amounted by appraisal to six thousand and twelve dollars and fifty-nine cents. He had before his death made "advancements" to his children in varying amounts.

It appears by the records of the First Congregational Church of St. Johnsbury, Vermont, that my grandfather was a member of it December 1, 1816. Whether he was then admitted to membership by profession, or was previously a member of some other church, I have not been able to ascertain. It was about six miles from his place to the Waterford meeting-house, and only three miles to St. Johnsbury. This probably caused him to join the church there, and I think he was admitted to it by profession. The records of this

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church show that Reuben, Samuel, Mary, Jacob, Hannah, Esther, Elizabeth, and Josiah Benton, "children of brother Samuel S. Benton of Waterford," "received baptism" July 23, 1817, and that his daughter Susan, named in the record as "Susanna Benton," was baptized July 31, 1818. As in July, 1817, Reuben was fourteen years old, and Hannah was twelve, Samuel ten, Esther nine, Mary eight, Jacob three, and Josiah Henry less than one year old, I infer that their father was not a member of any church when they were born, but that he was first admitted to church membership in December, 1816, and brought all his children for baptism in the following July. His daughter Susan was born April 1, 1818, and baptized July 31, 1818. January 15, 1828, he was dismissed from the First Church by letter, and July 8, 1832, he was admitted to the North Church in St. Johnsbury. When he moved to Lancaster in 1842, he did not unite with the church there, and a list of the members now published by the North Church of St. Johnsbury states that he was "excommunicated" from that church, February 27, 1846. An examination of the church records shows the following record:—

"Noted: That S. S. Benton, Jacob Benton, and Thomas MacKnight, having after repeated admonitions neglected to unite with the churches within whose limits they reside, and having given no satisfactory reason for the neglect, be suspended from the privileges of church fellowship, and that unless some reason by them be presented before the first of Sept. next why the church should act otherwise, then this suspension shall at that time pass into final excommunication. Noted: That the pastor write to these brethren accordingly."

The records show that in those days the same action was taken in many cases where members did not unite with other churches after they had left the town. But the present clerk of the North Church writes me that if the same action was taken at the present time, the North Church would have to excommunicate a good many of its absent members. From what I have learned about his matters in Lancaster, I conclude that soon after my grandfather purchased the large farm there he decided it would be better to remove to a smaller place elsewhere as soon as he could sell the Lancaster farm, and for

that reason probably did not unite with the church there. From what I know of him I am inclined to think the "repeated admonitions" to him to unite with the church in Lancaster were well calculated to prevent his doing so. His disposition was to do what he thought best without admonition from anybody. The result of this "excommunication" was to deprive two excellent men of church fellowship for no moral offence, which was a loss to them and certainly no gain to the church. I regard the publication by the North Church now of the fact that my grandfather and my uncle Jacob were "excommunicated," with no statement of the reason, as unjust to their memory and to their family, as it is also unjust in all other cases of excommunication for like cause. SAMUEL SLADE BENTON 1777

All my grandparents' eleven children, except Reuben and William Chauncey, became active members of the Congregational Church, and two of them, Samuel and Josiah, ministers in that denomination. But my grandmother was a Baptist, being admitted to the Baptist Church in Barnet, an adjoining town to Waterford, by baptism upon its organization, September 24, 1811. But after her husband became a member of the Congregational Church in St. Johnsbury, in 1816, and their children were there baptized, she attended that church with them. For this reason she was in 1820 "excluded" from membership in the Baptist Church. The church record of the proceeding is substantially as follows:—

Barnet, Vermont, April 26, 1820.

MEETING at the Church in accordance with a previous appointment and after solom prayor to the throne of grace for divine instruction an enquiry was made whether thare was any that had any thing special to communicate for the church to attend to. Sister Hannah Badger said she had a trial with sister Esther Benton and had first visited her but not getting satisfied she had requested brother John Clark to gow with her and take the second step which he did. They had not got convinced that she was innocent, or their difficulty with her in any way removed and they informed her that they would bring the matter before the church and requested her to be present, therefore they communicated their trial to the church.

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Sister Benton had told one that her husband opposed her meeting with the Baptist brethren with threats, and also offered to give her a cow if she would stay away, but she had told another that he did not oppose her attendance.

When reminded of these inconsistent statements she acknowledged the variance but appeared not to give sufficient evidence to them that in So doing she was sensible she was guilty of doing anything very wrong but endeavored to smooth over this known falsehood in a manner which led them to believe she thought God did not take notice of such conduct, and feeling that the cause was very much wounded, and not obtaining any satisfactory evidence that she was exercised with repentance of a Godly sort we felt it our duty to tell it to the church.

We also attended another trial which sister Badger had with sister Benton for breaking covenant with her brethren in communing with the unbaptised Congregational brethren contrary to her covenant obligation to the grief of her brethren. To this accusation she replied she had not done wrong and she intended to continue the association with the Congregationalists whenever she had opportunity to do so. She said that if any one was baptised by sprinkling and thought such a method right it made it right. She thought the Baptist church and the Congregational church both right, and since she could enjoy privileges with the Congregational church more conveniently she thought she ought and should feel justified in doing so.

Dear brethren we now submit the foregoing trial we have with sister Benton to you to dispose of according to gospel rule and pray the Lord Jesus to guide your mind by his spirit. Sister Benton not being present a committee was appointed to notify her of the time and place for the next meeting, and then the meeting was adjourned to May 30, 1820.

Barnet, Vt., May 30, 1820.

THE committee of notification advised the meeting that sister Benton said she had a young babe* and could not attend. The brethren wished to use her as well as they ought

* *Her son William was born April* 19, 1820.

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to under the circumstances by giving her an opportunity to be heard, therefore the meeting was adjourned to June 14, 1820, and notice sent sister Benton of the adjournment.

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Barnet, Vermont, June 14, 1820.

AT the meeting of the Church in accordance with the previous adjournment sister Benton was not present. She sent word that she did not wish to attend and hoped there would be no more adjournments on her account. It was declared manifest that she was not of us for she had gone out from among us and it was voted to exclude her from membership.

She continued to attend the Congregational Church, but did not join it, and the records of the Baptist Church in Barnet show that she was "restored to membership" July 20, 1831. The record states no reason for the restoration, and I know of none except that the rule against Baptists worshipping with Congregationalists had probably been abandoned.

My grandfather was about six feet in height, strong and sturdy in body, with a round, solid head and keen gray eyes. He was rather phlegmatic, not easily moved, deliberate and determined in all his ways and methods. He loved dogs, horses, the fields and the open air, and though somewhat inclined to be easy-going, was industrious and thrifty. He was not a man of many words, but had a keen sense of humor, and a dry way of putting things in their true light by a concise, caustic sentence. He had sound common sense and excellent judgment. He had no illusions but saw things as they were. He was dignified, peaceable, well-disposed, a good neighbor and a good citizen. His early education was very scanty, not beyond the "three R's," reading, writing, and arithmetic. He told me he only attended a few terms of district school when a small boy. He liked reading, but few books were to be had in Waterford then and there was little time to be spared from the toil required to keep a roof over the heads and bread in the mouths of his increasing family. He was a constant reader of the Bible. In a letter from his wife to his sister, Elizabeth Gridley, in 1820, she says: "Your brother Samuel is very

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much engaged in reading the Bible, and it takes all the time that he can spare." But notwithstanding his lack of education he spoke and wrote excellent English, and always expressed himself concisely and clearly. I have quite a number of his letters written before 1820, and more written after that time, to his sister Elizabeth and other relatives in Connecticut. They are creditable in matter and in style. He was of an earnest religious temperament, and had an old-fashioned reverence for sacred things. He seems to have been much attached to his eldest sister, Elizabeth, who married Silas Gridley and remained in Harwinton, and he kept up a regular correspondence with her and with her children after her death. His letters show a deep interest in religious matters and a constant desire to lead a Christian life. The opportunities for travel during his lifetime were limited, and while he and his wife appear to have occasionally visited Harwinton, Connecticut, Amherst, Massachusetts, Alstead, New Hampshire, and their relatives at other places in Vermont and New Hampshire at various times, I think he never went farther from home but once. In November, 1856, when he was seventy-nine years old, he went to Michigan, Chicago, Iowa, and Wisconsin, to visit his children. He seems to have enjoyed the trip, though he rode all one night and there were then no sleeping-cars. He wrote his wife a long account of the journey, saying among other things that he had enjoyed "attending meeting" and hearing his sons, Samuel and Josiah, preach at Maquoketa, Iowa, where his daughter Mary lived; and also speaking with affection of "the little granddaughter," who was my sister Mary, whom her Aunt Mary had adopted after my mother's death.

He hated secret associations, and was a strong "Anti-Mason" at the time when Masonry was a political issue and Vermont cast its vote for William Wirt as the "Anti-Masonic" candidate for President. In politics he was conservative, and was a "Henry Clay Whig." He took an interest in national affairs, and had, as I remember, in his old age very decided political views.

He was always in excellent health, and was about attending to his affairs until shortly before his death, when he was thrown

out of his carriage while driving and received an injury which probably caused his death at the age of eighty. His remains were first buried at Newbury, but later, upon the death of his wife, who died and was buried at Lower Waterford, the remains were removed to Waterford and buried by her side. SAMUEL SLADE BENTON 1777

My grandmother, Esther Prouty Benton, was a notable woman. She was born at Charlestown, New Hampshire, April 23, 1782, and was married at the age of nineteen, and she endured all the toils and privations of a rude frontier life from that early age. Her first child, Reuben, was born when she was only a little more than twenty-one, and between November, 1802, and December, 1825, she bore twelve children, eleven of whom she brought up to manhood and womanhood. She was a strong, handsome woman, straight, resolute, and active, with bright black eyes. She was very industrious, economical, and thrifty, but kind-hearted, affectionate, and generous. She had practically no education, and cared nothing for books. I doubt whether she ever read anything but the Bible and the hymn-book. She was always at work, even in her old age, and I well remember how she used to complain of what seemed to her the indolence and indifference of my grandfather, who when an old man would read and smoke at his ease without much regard to her complaints.

She was helpful and hospitable, a most excellent wife, mother, and neighbor. Her constant care for her children and her grandchildren continued while she lived. She was most unselfish and always doing something for others. When her children or grandchildren visited her she at once set about to see what she could find to give them, and to the last of her life was continually sending things to them. She was a great manager and a remarkable housekeeper, keeping all in the house and about it, in the garden and grounds, in the best condition. I remember her saying that the way for farmers to get on was always to have something growing,—as she expressed it, to "keep putting in seeds." She had sound health and a wonderfully clear skin and fine complexion, which she retained when she was quite old. She was a woman who controlled others, and I think the desire of my grandparents' children to be educated and get on in life came more from her

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than from their father. I doubt if he would have accomplished what he did without the constant influence of her ceaseless activity and ambition, and yet I think the mental strength and capacity of their children came from him more than from her.

After his death in 1857, she went to live with her eldest daughter, Mrs. Hannah Stoddard, at Lower Waterford, Vermont, where she died March 14, 1860, at the age of seventy-eight.

Fully to appreciate the character of my grandparents, it is necessary to know the conditions in which they lived and labored. They were of the early settlers of Northern Vermont, who were poor in money but rich in courage and in strength. These people were strong, sturdy, earnest men and women. They were sufficient unto themselves, and by severe and constant toil they took from the soil on which they settled nearly all that was necessary for a plain, simple, healthful life. They had clay for bricks and lime for mortar, and the woods gave them logs and lumber, from which they made their rude but comfortable dwellings and furniture. From the sap of the maple they made delicious sugar, and the hemlock gave the bark with which to tan the hides of their cattle into excellent leather. From the flax they made durable linen for household use and for summer clothing, and from the wool of their sheep, warm blankets and excellent "frocking" and other clothing for wear in winter. The lye leached from the ashes of the clearings made "potash" and "pearl-ash," not only for their own necessities, but for sale in the distant markets of Portland and Boston, where they obtained salt, almost the only necessity of life which Vermont does not produce. Wheat, rye, oats, barley, Indian corn, and nearly all other cereals of the temperate zone grew on the hillsides and in the valleys, while the blackberry, raspberry, blueberry, strawberry, and other healthful and delicious fruits grew wild in the woods and glades. They raised apples, currants, cherries, plums, pears, and other cultivated fruits. Coffee beans made a fair substitute for imported coffee, and they even had from the leaves of various shrubs a substitute for tea. Tobacco, less fragrant but equally as wholesome as that from beyond the sea, was raised with care in sheltered places.

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The lakes, rivers, and brooks were filled with bass, pickerel, muskalonge, trout, and other fish, while in the woods bear, deer, raccoon, partridge, and other game were found in abundance. They trapped the otter and the beaver in the streams and the fox on the hillside. They had geese, turkeys, fowls, and pigeons, while the horses, sheep, and cattle which grazed in their pastures and fed on the hay from their meadows were not excelled elsewhere. They built their own carding and fulling mills and looms, and their own tanneries. The women spun the yarn, wove the cloth, and made the sheets, blankets, and garments, and the soap for washing and the candles for light, in their own homes. The men tanned the leather, and once a year the travelling shoemaker set up his bench in the great kitchen with its capacious fireplace, and made the boots and shoes for the family. They had cider from the apple, and wine from the rhubarb, the elderberry, and the wild grape. They needed no butcher or baker, for they baked in their brick ovens and had their beef, mutton, and pork from their own flocks and herds and yards.

They put school-houses and meeting-houses on the hillsides, and the teachers taught for small pay and "boarded around" by the scholar, while the ministers were paid mainly in the produce of the farms. They had none of the appliances of modern husbandry. The mowing-machine, the horse-rake, the reaper, the threshing-machine, the improved plough, and the cultivator were unknown. The axe and the crowbar, the beetle and the wedge, the sickle and the scythe, the shovel and the hoe, the flail and the fan, were the simple implements with which they subdued the wilderness, cultivated the soil, and gathered its harvest. They had no eight-hour day, but labored "from sun to sun." With the exception of the Fourth of July, when they assembled to hear the Declaration of Independence read, and usually to hear an "oration" by the minister, and Thanksgiving, when they worshipped and fed on the good things they raised, they had no holidays; labor was so constant and unremitting that it became a habit of their lives, and their descendants even now, under better conditions, often feel that a leisure hour is an offence. They were orderly, industrious, frugal, God-fearing, and indepen-

SAMUEL SLADE BENTON 1777

dent people. They owned the land they tilled, and were the most perfect democracy in America. My grandparents lived this life and sustained its privations, endured its toils, and reared their family under its severe conditions. Considering the disadvantages of their childhood and the hardships of their early years, they seem to me to have been a very remarkable couple. I trust this imperfect sketch may give to their descendants some slight knowledge of their long and useful lives and of their many virtues. The accompanying portraits of my grandfather and grandmother are from daguerreotypes, taken about 1852, when he was seventy-five and she seventy years old. They are excellent likenesses of them as I remember them.

The following letters from those in my possession may tend to show something of the character of my grandfather and grandmother.

Mr. Silas Gridley
Harwinton Connecticut.

RESPECTED Brother after long absence from you either in seeing or hearing I now improve a few fleety moments to write a few lines informing you that we are enjoying a comfortable degree of health in our family and likewise that it is at this time a general time of health in this vicinity and although the past season seemed to be overspread with darkness in cutting short the latter harvest yet through the goodness of God we have reason to hope that the former harvest hath yielded a comfortable supply both for man and beast I have nothing very entertaining to write but feeling solicitous for your welfare I improve this favorable opportunity in writing hoping that these lines might meet you & yours enjoying health and prosperity

We have long been expecting to hear from you as we were informed by Mr. Hastings that Brother Jacob was a going directly to your house when he parted with him and that he expected to return back in the course of a month or two and knowing that his health was not so good as usual we think it somewhat strange that we have not heard from you nor him. As Mr. Hastings is now about setting out to go to Connecticut I forward this by him. We should be glad if you

Esther Prouty Benton
1852

would take the trouble to write to us. So I conclude this by subscribing myself

Your affectionate Brother

Sam^{l} S. Benton

SAMUEL SLADE BENTON 1777

I and my wife desire to tender our well wishes and desire to be remembered to all enquiring friend if any there should be. Waterford April the 27, 1817.

Watterford the 18 *October* 1820

DEAR Brother and Sister I feel under an obligation by the ties of nature to write a few lines to you and yours. I have not had any certain news about your health and the welfare of your family this long time and feel very anxious about your health and brothers. I should have wrote before this time but I have thought you would write to us and hoped if your health would permit you would come up and make us a visit. Do come if you can. I feel very anxious to have you come once more if you are able and to have brother come with you and all your children. You must write to us about your health. Brother Jacob is well and our family is well at this time. We have 11 children 10 living. Our babe is six months and his name is Chancy. Brother Jacob reppresents the town this year. I have not had any news from any of our friends below and am very anxious to hear from them all. How precious the time that we have spent together appears at this time. I long to have you come and hope you will. You must remember me to all our friends and tell them they must make us a visit if they can and write. Your brother Samuel is very much engaged in reading the Bible and it takes all the time that he can spare. I wish Joel and his wife would come up and all the rest of your children. I write these lines in such a hurry I fear you cannot read. Betsey is very anxious to see her Aunt and I trust she may. I remain your affectionate sister and Friend till death

Esther Benton

Silas Elizabeth Gridley

SAMUEL SLADE BENTON 1777

The graves of Samuel Slade and Esther (Prouty) Benton are marked by simple stones with these inscriptions:—

SAMUEL S. BENTON ESQ.
BORN
AT HARWINTON, CT.
APRIL, 27. 1777.
DIED
AT NEWBURY, VT.
DEC. 15, 1857.

ESTHER P.
WIFE
OF THE LATE
SAMUEL S. BENTON,
BORN
AT CHARLESTOWN N. H.
APRIL 23. 1782.
DIED
AT WATERFORD, VT.
MARCH 20. 1860.

They are buried side by side at Lower Waterford, Vermont.

Samuel Slade Benton House, Waterford
1806

Children of Samuel Slade Benton

THE children of Samuel Slade Benton were all born at Waterford, Vermont. The two oldest were born in the log house built in 1801, and the others in a frame house built in 1806. The accompanying picture is from a pencil drawing of this house as it was when he lived in it, but without the sheds and other outhouses.

Their names are as follows:—

REUBEN CLARK, born November 28, 1802; died October 11, 1857, at Rockford, Illinois.

HANNAH SLADE, born August 13, 1805; died March 3, 1893, at Waterford, Vermont.

SAMUEL AUSTIN, born May 3, 1807; died November 19, 1865, at Barnet, Vermont.

ESTHER, born July 11, 1808; died June 25, 1888, at River Falls, Wisconsin.

MARY, born October 16, 1809; died May 12, 1878, at Newbury, Vermont.

JACOB, born June 13, 1811; died September 14, 1812, at Waterford, Vermont.

ELIZABETH, born February 1, 1813; died May 14, 1887, at Coventry, Vermont.

JACOB, born August 19, 1814; died September 29, 1892, at Lancaster, New Hampshire.

JOSIAH HENRY, born August 8, 1816.

SUSAN MABEL, born April 1, 1818.

WILLIAM CHAUNCEY, born April 19, 1820; died April 23, 1859, at Beloit, Wisconsin.

CHARLES EMERSON, born December 11, 1825; died June 11, 1892, at Guildhall, Vermont.

Reuben Clark Benton

1802–1857

Reuben Clark Benton

1802–1857

HE was the first child of Samuel Slade and Esther (Prouty) Benton, and was born November 28, 1802, in the little log cabin built by his father in Waterford, Vermont. I suppose his first name was given to him because he was the first-born. I do not find the name in the family. I understand the middle name, Clark, was for Deacon Luther Clark of St. Johnsbury, who was a friend of my grandparents. Reuben grew up a very strong, powerful man physically, said to have been the strongest man in the county. He worked on the farm until he was of age, November 28, 1823. He then managed in some way to attend the Essex County Grammar School for three or four terms. I remember his saying that the first money he ever had of his own was forty dollars which he received for chopping for a clearing the winter after he was twenty-one.

He continued to work for wages and attend school as much as he could for some years after he was of age, keeping his home, I have no doubt, with his father and mother. He also taught district schools with success. He married Almira Fletcher, the daughter of Samuel and Mary Anne (Billings) Fletcher, of Waterford, and one of a large family of children. She was a very capable and ambitious woman. Before her marriage she sewed and taught school, and was so well esteemed as a teacher that she was called as far away as Haverhill, New Hampshire, where for several years she kept the school at "Horse Meadows," North Haverhill. She was of great help to her husband, and he always recognized her ability and assistance. They were married at North Haverhill, New Hampshire, April 9, 1829, by the Rev. Grant Powers, who was then settled in Haverhill. About this time, probably in the spring of 1829, his father went to St. Johnsbury to live on the farm of his brother Jacob, who died September 27, 1828, and Reuben took the home place at Waterford to carry on. His first

REUBEN CLARK BENTON 1802

child, named for himself, was born at this place May 13, 1830. He appears to have gone to St. Johnsbury, however, at some time prior to October 17, 1831, for on that date his second child, named for his father, Samuel Slade, was born there. He was taxed in that town in 1832 and in 1833.

April 28, 1832, he bought a part of the farm formerly belonging to his Uncle Jacob in St. Johnsbury from his father, who had purchased the farm from the other heirs of his brother, and he built a house there. November 28, 1833, he sold this property to his father and on the same day he bought of his father the original homestead lot in Waterford of one hundred acres with the buildings, for $1000. December 2, 1836, he bought the remaining hundred acres of the homestead place, comprising Lot 13, of his father for $400, making $1400 for the home farm of two hundred acres. In May, 1841, he sold the farm to Ira Brown for $2100. In December, 1840, he removed to Lunenburg, Vermont, where on December 9, 1840, he purchased a farm for $2200.

He was prominent and active in town affairs in Waterford all the time he lived there. In 1830 he was lister, highway surveyor, superintendent of schools, petit juror, and one of a committee of six elected for a purpose not named in the town record. In 1831 he was chosen lister and superintendent of schools, but declined to serve as lister. In 1835 he was lister, petit juror, surveyor of highways, and in 1836 he was also auditor of accounts. In 1837 he was lister and selectman. In 1838 he was auditor of accounts and moderator at the town meeting in March, and at the Freeman's meeting in September. In 1839 he was grand juror, one of a committee to buy a poor-farm, and was moderator. In 1840 he was grand juror. He was first taxed in Waterford in 1824, and last taxed there in 1840.

He lived in Lunenburg from 1840 to December, 1856, when he sold his farm for $4400, reserving the right to occupy the same free of rent until April 1, 1857, and rented a place on the river road in the south part of Guildhall. He was prominent in town affairs, and in county and state affairs, from the time he went to Lunenburg until he left it. He was first taxed there in 1842 and last in 1857. In 1842 and 1844

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he was highway surveyor and juror. In 1845 and 1846 he was moderator, highway surveyor, and town agent. In 1847 he was chosen representative to the General Assembly. In 1849 he was moderator, selectman, town agent, and fence-viewer. In 1850 he was representative to the General Assembly, selectman, and overseer of the poor. In 1851 he was selectman, overseer of the poor, and town agent. In 1852 he was selectman, town agent, and auditor. In 1853 he was moderator, town agent, and auditor. In 1854 he was auditor and town agent. In 1855 he was auditor, and in 1856 he was town treasurer. From 1846 to 1856 he was a justice of the peace. In 1845–1846 he was elected Associate Judge of the County Court for Essex County. In 1847–1848 he was elected sheriff of Essex County.

In 1854–1855 he was State's Attorney for Essex County. He had a natural gift for the law. His training in town affairs helped him in that direction, and after he was forty years of age he studied sufficiently to be admitted to practice in 1851. He became one of the most successful lawyers in that part of the State, especially in the trial of cases, and the record of his indictments while State's Attorney shows that he became a good criminal lawyer. He was a member of the State Senate in 1856, and elected to the Senate of 1857, but died before taking his seat.

I remember my Uncle Reuben when he visited my father at Clinton, Michigan, in 1854. He loved to hunt and was a good shot. He made much of me, and I was taken to drive with him and my father, who had great admiration for his elder brother. And well he might have, for Reuben was a king among men. He was six feet in height, broad-shouldered and stoutly built, and weighed about two hundred and twenty-five pounds, with no superfluous flesh. He had strong common sense, and was positive, aggressive, and dominant, but of excellent good temper and kindness of heart. He was fond of mathematics and learned and practised surveying. He wrote with ease and well, and was a fluent, forcible speaker.

I last saw him when he came to my father's at Bradford, Vermont, in 1857, on his way to the West. He stayed for a

REUBEN CLARK BENTON 1802

day or two only, and then my father went with him. I drove them to the railroad station, and well remember his jovial and kindly way with me on the drive of some two or three miles. He had then sold his place at Lunenburg and went West to find a place to take his family and settle. He was enthusiastic about the opportunities of the great West, which was then in the States east of the Mississippi, and though fifty-five years old was eager to begin a new career there. My father accomplished his business, which was in relation to loans due him in Michigan and, I think, in Iowa, and returned, leaving Reuben in the West. A short time after, as my father and I were husking corn in the barn on the Bradford farm, a messenger came with a telegram telling of my uncle's death at Rockford, Illinois, October 11, 1857. His brother William was with him when he died. His remains were brought home and he was buried in the cemetery on the river road in the south part of Guildhall, Vermont.

He left a substantial estate for the times, but no will, and the estate was settled by his widow, Almira F. Benton, as administratrix. The accompanying picture is copied from a daguerreotype, now in the possession of his daughter, Mrs. Robinson. It was taken when he was about fifty years old by a travelling artist, who caught him as he was in his ordinary dress and not freshly shaven. It is, however, a good likeness of him as I remember him.

After his death his widow moved to Johnson, Vermont, where her son Reuben Clark and her eldest daughter Almira had been teachers, to educate her two younger children, Caleb Henry and Mary Esther. She lived there until her death, August 29, 1873, when she was buried by the side of her husband at Guildhall, Vermont.

The following information as to my uncle's legislative action I have obtained from the Vermont legislative journals and documents.

In 1846, when he was member of the House from Lunenburg, he was chairman of a committee from Essex County to canvass votes for state officers, and a member of the "General Committee" from Essex County. This was a committee to which all matters which were referred to a committee

Reuben Clark Benton
1852

of one from each county were referred. He appears to have been a very earnest Whig, and to have voted with that party on numerous votes against the war with Mexico. One of the most interesting divisions which took place between the Democrats and the Republicans on this subject was upon a resolution offered by Mr. Stephen Thomas, representative from Fairlee, and the Democratic leader, "That both Houses meet in joint assembly on Wednesday, the 21st instant, at four o'clock in the afternoon to offer up thanks to Almighty God for the signal victory lately obtained in Monterey, Mexico, by the American Army under the command of Gen. Taylor; that the Reverend Chaplain of the Senate be requested to address the Throne of Grace in prayer suited to the occasion." This resolution was laid on the table by a Whig vote of 108 and a Democratic vote of 55, Mr. Benton voting in the affirmative. Subsequently the House adopted a resolution with regard to the Mexican war, having a preamble reciting that—

"*Whereas* in our judgment the existing war with Mexico was not founded in any imperative necessity such as may justify or excuse a Christian nation for resorting to arms, and has now manifestly become an offensive war against a neighboring republic: And whereas we have just grounds for anticipating that the territory which has been or may be occupied or conquered will become slave territory, and as such claim admission to the Union: And whereas its admission as such and with a mixed population degraded by ignorance and superstition, and allied to us neither in interests, character nor language, will endanger the harmony, welfare and perpetuity of the Union: Wherefore, Resolved: That the honor and best interests of the Union will be subserved by a speedy end of the war with Mexico and a settlement of all matters in dispute by arbitration or negotiation.

"*Resolved:* That Vermont will not give its countenance, aid or assent to the admission into the Federal Union of any new State whose constitution tolerates slavery, and does hereby appeal to each of her sister States to concur in its own name in this declaration."

This resolution was adopted by a party vote of 102 Whigs to 43 Democrats, Mr. Benton voting in the affirmative.

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On the next day the Democrats introduced a resolution, instructing his Excellency the Governor to forward to the President of Mexico a copy of the resolutions passed by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont, declaring the "war now existing between the United States and Mexico as unjust and oppressive on the part of the United States," which was laid on the table and there remained, not being taken up before adjournment.

Mr. Benton appears to have been very attentive to his duties, and is recorded upon nearly every roll-call. He was obviously a strict party man, and was opposed to all bills to increase taxation or to increase salaries. He voted against the bill to increase the assistant judges of the Supreme Court from four to five members; and against the bill for suppression of bowling alleys. He voted for a bill to increase the tax on pedlers on foot from $10 to $20. He voted against a bill to stop the geological survey of the State; against a bill to deduct money owed from real estate valuation for purposes of taxation; also against a bill to submit to voters the question of the abolition of the school fund. He voted for a bill requiring the State Treasurer to delay payment of the salary of the judges of the Supreme Court until they reported their decisions as required by statute law; and also for a resolution asking the Congressional delegation to change the terms of the United States Circuit and District Courts from Rutland and Windsor to Burlington and Chelsea.

He was a member of the Constitutional Convention of 1850 from Lunenburg. Fifteen amendments were proposed at this Convention by the Council of Censors. Mr. Benton voted against all but two. He voted against the amendment to apportion representation in the House according to population, and not one representative for each town, and this amendment was rejected. He voted for the amendment making certain the constitution of the Senate. He voted against the amendment providing that no balloting for town representative should be commenced after twelve o'clock of the night of election day, which was rejected. He voted against an amendment providing that registers of probate should be elected by popular vote, which was rejected. He voted against amendments

providing that assistant judges of the County Court, sheriffs, state attorneys, judges of probate, and justices of the peace should be elected by popular vote, all of which were adopted. He voted against the amendment limiting the number of justices of the peace according to population in each town, which was rejected. He voted against an amendment providing that the Council of Censors should thereafter submit propositions for amendment of the Constitution directly to the people and not to the Legislature, which was rejected. REUBEN CLARK BENTON 1802

He is recorded as having voted on every question before the Convention, including a motion at the close of the Convention that two days be deducted from the pay of the members, which was defeated although he with forty-four others voted for it.

When he was a member of the House of Representatives of the State of Vermont in 1850, he was chairman of the committee to canvass votes for state officers, also chairman of the committee on roads, which committee had jurisdiction of matters relating to roads, ferries, bridges, and railroads. At that time there were many applications for charters of railroads. He appears to have been very active and quite influential, the Journal showing that he prevailed upon most of the matters in which he acted.

He introduced a resolution that the committee on the bill relating to the Judiciary be "instructed to inquire into the expediency of erecting Courts of Conciliation, and Precognition, within this State, and report by bill or otherwise." He was also chairman of the select committee upon the bill relating to the Judiciary. He voted against the bill for the increase of pay of the members of the Legislature, and also in favor of an amendment to the bill, providing that it should not apply to the members of that Legislature. But the bill was enacted without such amendment. He opposed and defeated a resolution to adjourn for the purpose of accepting an invitation of the President of the Vermont Central Railroad to the Legislature to take a trip over that road; and also opposed and defeated an act exempting plank road stock from taxation. He voted against an act to "repeal the faculty tax on attorneys and physicians" and opposed all bills for in-

REUBEN CLARK BENTON 1802

creased expenditures and reduction of taxation. He is recorded as having voted upon all matters except two upon which the yeas and nays were called.

He was a member of the State Senate of Vermont in 1856, at which session his son, Reuben C. Benton, of Johnson, was elected secretary. He was a member of the committee to inform the Governor of the organization of the two branches, chairman of the committee on banks, and a member of the committee on roads. He appears to have been very constant in attention to his duties and fairly influential, although he does not seem to have exercised the controlling influence in the Senate that he did in the House. He was also chairman of the joint committee of the House and Senate of the Library, and November 15, he submitted a report and a resolution which was adopted. As this report and resolution were really the foundation of what has been done to create a Vermont State Library they are interesting. The report was as follows:—

"An examination into the condition of the State Library has illustrated 'confusion worse confounded.' For several years past the Librarians have failed to make an annual report as required by law. There is no Catalogue of the books; nothing to show the number belonging to the State; how many have been purchased or otherwise procured, or how much money has been expended therefor. Very many books are absent, leaving important and valuable sets incomplete, and whether destroyed or in the hands of persons who improperly retain them, is unknown, excepting what appears from a very few receipts. Unauthorized exchanges have also been made to the detriment of the State.

"A thorough reorganization and classification are demanded; imperfect sets of books should be made complete and new publications purchased.

"The Librarian should prepare a Catalogue and make an annual report of all additions, losses, purchases, exchanges, and moneys expended. The room needs a new carpet, additional shelves and a railing which will prevent the use and removal of books without the knowledge or consent of the Librarian.

"But as your Committee have had but little time to con-

sider this subject they feel unable to propose a remedy or action in detail, and therefore recommend that this report on the matter referred to us be entered on the records of the Senate and the adoption of the following Resolution. REUBEN CLARK BENTON 1802

"*Resolved*, by the Senate and House of Representatives, That the Governor be instructed to appoint an efficient person to act conjointly with the Librarian, to collect all books and property belonging to the State Library, classify the same, prepare a Catalogue and report to the next Legislature their action in full, together with such recommendations of repairs, purchases and regulations for the future government of the Library as to them seem sufficient."

He advocated earnestly but ineffectually the passage of an act to ascertain the amount of personal property in the State exempt from taxation by reason of debts owing.

He voted in favor of an act, which was passed, appropriating $20,000 to be expended by the Governor in his discretion "for the purpose of furnishing food and clothing to such of the inhabitants of Kansas as may be in a suffering condition for the want thereof."

He is recorded as voting upon every question upon which the yeas and nays were called during the session.

On the 14th of October he offered a resolution which was adopted, "that a Committee of three be appointed by the President to consider the outrages recently perpetrated against the freedom of speech and debate in our National Legislature."

This resolution referred to the assault by Preston S. Brooks of South Carolina upon Senator Sumner of Massachusetts. Mr. Benton was chairman of the committee, and November 12th he reported resolutions which after debate were adopted without change.

This report shows his style of writing and method of argument, and was as follows:—

"*To the Senate now in Session:*

YOUR Committee to whom was referred the resolution relative to outrages in our National Legislature, against freedom of speech and debate, respectfully represent, that they find the right to freedom of speech expressly guaranteed in the Constitution of the United States. They believe it to have

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been a right established before the Constitution, and on such a basis that not even the Constitution itself could render it more sacred.

"The early settlers of this country made this right one of their most cherished immunities. Driven out by oppression at home, seeking a shelter from the religious persecutions of Laud and the civil tyranny of Strafford, they came here to plant and establish republican institutions. The right of free speech was one of the earliest and deepest rooted of these: next to their religious persecutions they abhorred the denial of this right: next to the Court of High Commission, the Court of the Star Chamber was most oppressive. That plain out-spoken freedom of debate and earnestness in denouncing error which resented the heavy yoke of the House of Tudor, and rebelled against the imbecile tyranny of the House of Stuart, was brought with the early settlers of this country and by them established as a fundamental principle of republicanism. From the time when Peter Wentworth stood up in the Parliament of Elizabeth to defend this right, to the time when Patrick Henry hurled a haughty defiance to the royal servants, that principle became more settled and better recognized each succeeding year.

"Two hundred years of conflict and of trial, of good fortune and of ill fortune, but of final success, had not only endeared, but sanctified it in the hearts of the lovers of republican liberty; and when the days of conflict were passed and the Republic was triumphantly established, among the chief and foremost of immunities to be guaranteed to the people was that of *free speech.*

"Not only was its exercise guaranteed by the specific provisions of the Constitution, but was embraced in the fundamental doctrines of our republican institutions, and is essential to their legitimate, successful operation, to their very existence.

"The proper exercise, by the elector, of his elective franchise as a citizen requires intelligent action. If he cannot comprehend that action, then he is not an elector, but an automaton moving at the will of another.

"His intelligent action can only be secured by full and free

discussion. If this discussion be controlled or curtailed, the power so curtailing and controlling that right is the real ruler of the State; not the people. This is a right belonging to, and to be exercised by, every citizen. But when men are set apart as the servants of the people, their legislative agents, this right of free speech which they possess in common with their fellow citizens becomes merged in, and expanded into, a positive, an imperative duty they owe their constituency. Members of Congress and of Legislatures are chosen to watch over the interests of the people, to guard their rights and to redress their wrongs. By the nature of the service they have undertaken, and the magnitude of the interests in their charge, they are bound, at all times, to a faithful discharge of their duty; and not only so, but when great principles are involved, when vital interests are at stake, they are especially bound to stand boldly forth and acquit themselves like men.

"The private citizen, having only his own interest to guard, may, if he choose, neglect it, but the public servant who does so is guilty of a gross neglect of his duty. To uphold the right, to oppose the wrong, he must address the reason and understanding of men, he must speak as well as vote. Nor should he shrink from denouncing the wrong as well as upholding the right through fear of disputes and even personal collision. His duties are to preserve the rights of the people, not to see or permit them to be sacrificed for the sake of personal quiet. It is better that there should be earnest and even bitter discussions and contentions in Legislative Halls than that error should be unrebuked; than to have legislative action crude and unsatisfactory, sending forth turmoils and contentions over the whole country. No false delicacy, no motives of policy, should deter a legislator from opposing, from denouncing, if need be, what is wrong, in the outset.

"False legislation cannot be veiled and hidden from the eyes of a free and intelligent constituency. Whatever is passed over in silence, whatever of evil issues are not fully and fairly met, denounced, and vanquished in their place, come forth and spread over a wide field, doing incalculable, often irremediable harm. Whenever faulty legislation is allowed, by default or otherwise, it serves to weaken the respect of the people, not only

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for the law-makers, but for the laws themselves, which is one of the worst evils which can exist in a republic. To omit to oppose an evil for the sake of avoiding collision with the defenders of such evil, is only cicatrizing the wound, leaving a canker to corrode and fester and poison the whole system.

"Such are some of the views we entertain of the rights and duties of public servants. These duties, in the opinion of your Committee, have been often neglected; these rights too often outraged. They derive this opinion from numerous circumstances brought to their notice, and particularly from the one referred to in a series of resolutions herewith submitted.

"On the 22nd day of May last, Hon. CHARLES SUMNER, a Senator from Massachusetts, was assaulted by a member of the House of Representatives, from South Carolina. The ostensible reason for this assault was offence taken from a speech delivered in the United States Senate, by the Senator, in which were strictures on the action of a remote relation of the assailant. Your Committee have not deemed it necessary to consider the speech to ascertain whether it was unjust toward the relative of Mr. BROOKS or his State. So much of it as relates to matters of public importance and interest is not alleged by the defenders of the assault as an excuse for the outrage; so much as relates to personal considerations between the two men is not within the province of any public legislature to adjust. Your Committee, however, find matter for grave consideration, in other circumstances than the simple assault and the ostensible reason for it. These considerations are of a public character, and demand the attention of all. They are found in the fact that the perpetration of a deed, in itself cowardly and brutal, justified by reasons of a private nature only, meets a hearty response, is lauded and applauded, its perpetrator re-elected to Congress, feasted with public dinners, made merry with wine, loaded with presents and praises in one part of the country, while the deed is excused, justified or palliated in another, by men both of high station and of low degree. It was surely no personal private interest that has brought forth the plaudits that have welcomed the assailant throughout the entire South. The act itself was signally destitute of all attributes to merit such praise. Stealing

upon his victim with malice aforethought, armed with deadly weapons, and sustained by friendly conspirators, there is neither moral greatness nor even brute courage in the deed. A cruel assailant, and yet afraid to meet on equal terms the man he assails; a blustering duelist, yet coward-like declining the challenge himself had sent! Surely, the man has no personal traits to entitle him to the éclat with which he is received. Your Committee cannot believe that the cause assigned for the assault was its real reason, nor the true reason for its justification. They regard it as a mere pretext to cover a deeper, darker design. They are confirmed in this belief, when they consider that the speech was decorous in language, conflicting with no parliamentary rule of debate, from the fact that he was not considered out of order by the Senate, and from the further fact that he was even exceeded in personal abuse by what had repeatedly been applied to the Senator himself, by some of the very men professing such exceeding indignation. It was a pretext, and only a pretext, to call it a personal chastisement, and were it so, the act was the more unjustifiable, the more heinous. Had Mr. BROOKS, under such circumstances, assaulted a Southern Senator, instead of presents and praises he would have met execrations and punishment at home. These approvals of, and rewards for, the act, are not on account of respect for the action or the actor, or care for his relative, but because they disliked Senator SUMNER on account of the opinions he expressed, and were enemies to those immortal principles of freedom he advocated. Your committee are of opinion that there are institutions, even in this boasted land of liberty, which will not bear the light of discussion, and that they are compelled to regard the outrage in question, its justification and palliation, as a deliberate attempt to repress expressions of opinion on the subject of a peculiar institution which cannot be defended by reason! Viewed in this light, there is in the outrage in question, and in the multiplicity of similar outrages from like sources and from similar causes, something more than mere personal quarrels; there is a *public contest*, and a contest too of no ordinary character, of no trivial importance. *Therefore*,

REUBEN CLARK BENTON 1802

REUBEN CLARK BENTON 1802

"*Resolved*, That we deem it the right of every private citizen, and the duty of every public legislator, to express his opinions freely on all subjects of legislation; that this right is secured, and this duty is enjoined, in the fundamental principles of our government; that their exercise is essential to its existence, and 'formidable to tyrants only.'

"*Resolved*, That we have learned of the assault upon the person of the distinguished Senator from Massachusetts with regret; we tender to him our sympathy in his suffering; and assure him that we regard the assault on him as an assault through him on principles which we cherish, and of which we regard him as a noble expounder.

"*Resolved*, That by reason of the public justification of the assault on Senator SUMNER by a portion of the people of this republic, and its palliation by another, we cannot regard it as the vindication of any personal affront, but are forced to consider it a deliberate attempt to stifle the free expression of opinion on subjects of national importance.

"*Resolved*, That we enjoin upon our Senators and Representatives in Congress the duty of speaking boldly and freely on all subjects under their consideration; and that Vermont will defend her servants in the performance of this duty, now and forever, and at whatever cost."

The foregoing is a facsimile of the signature of Reuben C. Benton as foreman of the grand jury in Essex County at the May term, 1849.

Reuben Clark and Almira (Fletcher) Benton had the following children:—

REUBEN CLARK, born May 13, 1830, at Waterford, Vermont; died January 8, 1895, at Minneapolis, Minnesota.

SAMUEL SLADE, born October 17, 1831, at St. Johnsbury, Vermont; died September 12, 1835, at St. Johnsbury.

ALMIRA FLETCHER, born July 29, 1836, at Waterford, Vermont.

MARY ESTHER, born April 2, 1839, at Waterford; died October 8, 1885, at Johnson, Vermont.

REUBEN CLARK BENTON 1802

Caleb Henry, born February 26, 1841, at Lunenburg, Vermont; died November 10, 1890, at Minneapolis, Minnesota.

A sketch of Reuben Clark Benton follows at page 293.

Almira Fletcher Benton married Le Roy Robinson at Johnson, Vermont, October 9, 1865. They have had four children, all born at Stanstead, Province of Quebec:—

Mirabel, born November 18, 1866.

Jessie, born February 4, 1869; died February 26, 1892.

Alice, born July 29, 1870.

Katherine, born July 6, 1873.

Mary Esther Benton married Albert A. Leland at Johnson, Vermont, April 25, 1860. They had eight children, all born in Johnson, Vermont:—

Frederick Adams, born May 27, 1861.

Lucy Louise, born July 4, 1865.

George Benton, born December 14, 1870.

Thomas Henry, born February 20, 1872.

Mary Almira, born January 23, 1874.

Clarence Albert, born March 8, 1877.

Helen Douglass, born December 4, 1880; died October 12, 1882.

Clifford M., born July 4, 1882.

A sketch of Caleb Henry Benton follows at page 303.

Hannah Slade Benton

1805–1893

Hannah Slade Benton

1805–1893

SHE was the second child and the oldest daughter of Samuel Slade and Esther (Prouty) Benton, and was born at Waterford, Vermont, August 13, 1805, in the original log house built by her father in 1801. She was named for her father's mother, Hannah Slade. The only education she had was at the primitive district school, and one or two terms at the Essex County Grammar School.

When she was about twenty-three years of age, she married Jesse Willard Stoddard, the son of a neighbor, and they lived on a farm in Waterford all their lives. They had eleven children, all born at Waterford, as follows: —

ESTHER MARIA, born April 6, 1829.

JOSIAH WILLARD, born April 30, 1830.

JESSE WILLIAM, born December 3, 1831; who died April 12, 1833.

HANNAH ELIZABETH, born January 26, 1834.

SAMUEL SLADE, born December 12, 1836.

HARRIET KINNEY, born October 19, 1838.

MARY BOARDMAN, born May 26, 1840.

CHARLES J., born June 1, 1842.

GEORGE ALLEN, born January 8, 1845.

EMILY ELLEN, born November 4, 1846; who died June 18, 1863.

HELEN RELIEF, born December 17, 1850; who died December 25, 1850.

She was admitted to the North Congregational Church at St. Johnsbury by profession May 13, 1832; and her husband was admitted in the same manner at the same time. February 14, 1851, they were removed by letter to the Congregational Church at Waterford, of which they remained members while they lived. I understand she was always much interested in church affairs. She was a woman of strong, independent character, of great force and industry. I remem-

HANNAH SLADE BENTON 1805

ber her as long ago as when I was a boy of five years of age. I saw her last at the home of her son, Josiah Stoddard, where she lived, in 1890, I think. She was then eighty-five, clear-minded, of good memory, and quite capable of taking care of herself and having a suitable degree of influence upon all those around her. She was what may be called a notable woman, and much respected by her neighbors.

Her mother came to live with her after her father's death, and was cared for by her from 1857 to the spring of 1860, when she died at her house in Waterford. Her husband died August 26, 1882, and she died at the house of her eldest son, Josiah Willard Stoddard, in Lower Waterford, March 3, 1893, at the age of eighty-eight. Both she and her husband are buried by the side of her father and mother in the cemetery at Lower Waterford, Vermont. The following is her signature from a letter in my possession written in 1859.

The accompanying picture is from a photograph furnished me by one of her grandchildren.

Hannah Slade Stoddard
1851

Samuel Austin Benton

1807–1865

Samuel Austin Benton

1807–1865

HE was the second son and third child of Samuel Slade and Esther (Prouty) Benton, and was born at Waterford, Vermont, May 3, 1807. His first name was obviously given him for his father, but I have not ascertained for whom his middle name was given, though it is a family name in other branches of the Benton family. He worked on the farm until he was of age, in 1828, attending the district schools in the winter.

March 9, 1828, he was admitted to the North Congregational Church at St. Johnsbury by profession. He was of a scholarly disposition, and fitted for college under great difficulties, supporting himself and paying his way by manual labor and by teaching district schools, while he attended the Essex County Grammar School and Peacham Academy. He was admitted at Amherst College in 1832, when he was twenty-five years of age. I have not ascertained why he went to Amherst, but it probably was because his Aunt Mary, wife of Deacon Samuel Kingsbury, lived there. At the end of his second college year, in 1834, he entered Middlebury College, at Middlebury, Vermont, where he graduated in 1836. He was principal of the Academy at Randolph, Vermont, in 1836, 1837, and 1838, and studied theology with the Rev. James Bucknam of Chelsea, Vermont, in 1837 and 1838.

August 7, 1838, he was licensed to preach by the Orange County Association, and he supplied for ten months the pulpit of the Congregational Church at Strafford, Vermont, when he was called to the pastorate at that place. About the same time he was invited to become pastor of the Congregational Church at Saxton's River in Rockingham, Vermont, where he was ordained January 15, 1840, and preached until November 23, 1842. He then went to Armada, Michigan, where he was settled, October 15, 1843, as a home missionary under commission from the American Home Missionary

SAMUEL AUSTIN BENTON 1807

Society. He lived at Armada and preached there and at Bruce, a place near by, for seven years. He then preached entirely at Armada for six years more, when he received a call to the Congregational Church at Anamosa, Iowa, which he accepted, and was installed there December 1, 1856. He preached there until November 24, 1861, when he resigned and preached his farewell sermon, having been commissioned November 22, 1861, as chaplain of the 14th Iowa Regiment. His health was not sufficient to endure the hardships of army life, and January 30, 1862, he resigned as chaplain and returned to his home at Anamosa. I cannot ascertain that he preached regularly at any place after this.

September 10, 1838, when he was thirty-one years old, he married Sarah Maria Nutting, daughter of William and Mary (Hubbard) Nutting of Randolph, Vermont. They had one son, Samuel Nutting, who was born at Saxton's River, December 22, 1839, and died at Anamosa, Iowa, August 6, 1859, where he is buried. Samuel Austin Benton's wife, Sarah Maria, died August 3, 1841, at Saxton's River, Vermont, and is there buried.

March 2, 1842, he married her sister, Eliza Anne Nutting, at Randolph, Vermont. She died August 2, 1864, at Anamosa, Iowa, and is there buried. August 29, 1865, he married Miranda Dockstader of Wyoming in Madison Township, Iowa. I understand that in 1865, he had been very ill with typhoid pneumonia, and Mrs. Dockstader, at whose house in Wyoming he boarded, had with her daughter nursed and cared for him with great fidelity. After his recovery he married the daughter, and with her then went East on a long-planned visit to his brothers and sisters and the home of his childhood. He visited his brother Josiah at Maidstone, Vermont, his brother Charles at Guildhall, Vermont, and his brother Jacob at Lancaster, New Hampshire. He then went to see his oldest sister, Hannah Slade Stoddard, at Lower Waterford, Vermont. While there he expressed a great desire to visit the old "Benton farm" where he was born and brought up, and especially the trout brook in which he fished as a boy. He said he wanted to wade in the brook and walk over every foot of the farm. His nephew, George A. Stod-

Samuel Austin Benton
1864

dard, went with him. It was a long walk, and coming back Mr. Benton was taken with profuse hemorrhage from the lungs, and reached his sister's house with great difficulty. He never recovered, though he was removed a short distance to the house of his sister, Mrs. Elizabeth Kinney, after a few days. His brothers, Josiah or Charles, were with him most of the time until he died, November 19, 1865, at the house of his sister Elizabeth, at McIndoes Falls, in the town of Barnet, Vermont. His remains were taken by his widow and his brother Charles to Anamosa, where he was buried beside his wife and son by his old people, from the church where he had preached under many discouragements with acceptance and success.

SAMUEL AUSTIN BENTON 1807

The picture of him is from a photograph taken in September, 1864, after he had been ill for some years, but is the only one I can find to be now in existence.

When he went to Armada in 1843, he had a little Morgan mare of which he was very fond, and he drove her all the way from Vermont to Michigan, taking his wife and little boy, then about two years and a half old, with him. At Armada he bought land and became in reality a farmer missionary. I remember being there as a boy, about 1854 or 1855. He then had Morgan horses, the progeny of the little mare which he drove from Vermont, kept sheep, and had quite a farm. When he went to Armada there was no church or place of worship, and no school, services being held in the houses of the settlers. He opened a school which he himself taught for some time, and he soon induced his people to build a small meeting-house, which I remember seeing. I remember hearing my uncle say with a good deal of satisfaction that he laid all the shingles on that meeting-house with his own hands. He and his wife lived in a very plain and primitive way. Money, I think, was very scarce, and I doubt if he ever had much salary at Armada beyond the assistance which he received from the Home Missionary Society.

He was an old-fashioned, strict construction Calvinist. I remember his being at Clinton, Michigan, visiting my father when I was a lad, and hearing him reprove my father for having in his library a set of the then recently published works of Dr. Channing, saying that they were not proper books

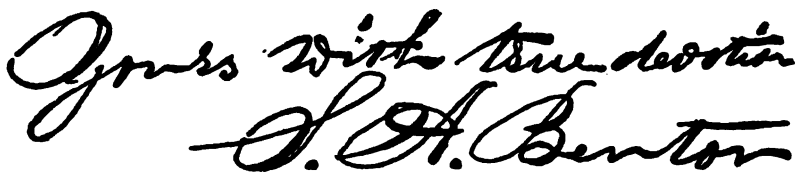
SAMUEL AUSTIN BENTON 1807

for a Christian minister to have. This prompted me to look into the books to see what they were, with the result that I read them all, and I now have the identical set, which my father afterwards gave to me.

My Uncle Samuel was most painstaking in whatever he had to do. I think he always wrote his discourses and with great care. He was an earnest anti-slavery man, took an interest in public affairs and especially in town matters. He was a good neighbor, helpful, kind, and considerate, and had the respect and esteem not only of the people of his own congregation but of the town. One of his old parishioners writes me that "Mr. Benton was an excellent man, a good preacher, and a faithful worker in church and society, and his going from us was regretted by all."

He first went to Anamosa to keep an appointment to preach made by his brother Josiah, but which he was unable to keep. Shortly after his return to Armada he received a call from Anamosa, and with true missionary spirit left his people at Armada, and went to the then new field in Iowa. He always, however, retained his interest in his old church and its members, and they did not forget him, and after his death held a special memorial service to show their respect for his life and conduct among them.

This is a facsimile of his signature to a letter in 1833.



He accumulated very little property, and was practically a poor man all his life. He left a will as follows:—

KNOW all men by these presents that I, Samuel A. Benton of Anamosa, in Jones County, in the State of Iowa, Minister of the Gospel being of sound Disposing memory do make & publish this my last will and testament.

1st I give and bequeath to my beloved wife Miranda all of my Estate both Real and Personal for her exclusive use

and benefit during her natural life, except provided she shall bear a child or children to me then I give and bequeath to such child or children one half of all my estate both real and personal to be set off to each on its attaining the age of majority, and if more than one, said half to be equally divided between them, and the income of the same to be used for their support and maintenance during their minority. SAMUEL AUSTIN BENTON 1807

2nd. I give and bequeath to the American board of Commissioners for foreign missions whatever remains of my estate after the decease of my wife Miranda not herein otherwise disposed of.

3rd. I ordain and appoint my wife Miranda and Addison W. Pratt of Wyoming in Jones County, State of Iowa, Joint Executors of this my last Will and Testament.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF I have hereunto set my hand and seal and publish and declare this to be my last Will and Testament this fourth day of November, A. D. One thousand Eight hundred and Sixty-five.

S. A. BENTON

The appraisal of all his personal property except that which by law passed to his widow amounted only to $270.50. Beside this there was some real estate subject to tax sales, and a small amount which was sold for $1359. The payment of his debts absorbed substantially all the property as I am informed.

He had only one child, the son by his first wife, who died August 6, 1859.

Esther Benton

1808–1888

Esther Benton

1808–1888

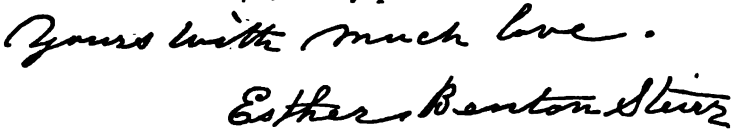
SHE was the second daughter and the fourth child of Samuel Slade and Esther (Prouty) Benton. She was named for her mother, and was born at Waterford, Vermont, July 11, 1808. She was the first child born in the frame house constructed in the place of the original log house built by my grandfather. She attended the district school in Waterford, and went as a member of her father's family to St. Johnsbury in 1828, when she was twenty years of age. November 13, 1831, in the great revival of that year, she was admitted by profession as a member of the North Congregational Church at St. Johnsbury, and remained a member of that church during her life. She was of studious disposition, and attended the Essex County Grammar School with her brother Reuben and sister Hannah, and qualified herself as a teacher. She taught district schools in Vermont until 1835, when she was twenty-seven years of age, and then went to the McLean Asylum at Somerville, then a part of Charlestown, Massachusetts. She was much attached to her younger brother, William Chauncey, and aided him to go to school from her small earnings as a teacher.

She was employed at the McLean Asylum as an attendant from May, 1835, to September 1, 1845, and was paid at the rate of ten dollars a month. She went to Charlestown, Massachusetts, at the request of a young doctor who had married a friend of hers in Waterford. While there she became acquainted with James Timothy Starr. He was an attendant in the hospital from 1839 until 1845, at the rate of thirteen dollars a month, with occasional payments for unusual hazards in care of certain patients. September 1, 1845, she married Mr. Starr at Charlestown, and they went, I think, to Milton, Vermont, from which town he came, and lived on a farm until 1856, when they removed to Lakeland, Minnesota, and there lived on a farm for about six months, when

ESTHER BENTON 1808

they went to another farm at Hudson, Wisconsin, living there until 1880, when they moved to River Falls, Wisconsin. Before this removal my aunt was stricken with paralysis, from which she never fully recovered, although she lived until 1888. She died June 25, 1888, at River Falls, Wisconsin, but is buried in the new cemetery at Hudson, Wisconsin.

She was always a member of the Congregational Church in the town where she lived, and was quite active in church and social matters. She was very fond of reading and of writing, and she wrote well, with a good English style. She had no children, but was always interested in the families of her brothers and sisters, and kept up correspondence with them all her life. Her husband was living at Waukesha, Wisconsin, in 1898. The following is a facsimile of her signature from a letter written in 1870, in my possession.



The accompanying picture is from a daguerreotype taken probably soon after she was married, in 1845.

Esther Benton Starr
1846

Mary Benton

1809–1878

Mary Benton

1809–1878

SHE was the third daughter and the fifth child of Samuel Slade and Esther (Prouty) Benton, and was named for her father's sister Mary, who married Deacon Kingsbury of Amherst. She was born at Waterford, October 16, 1809, and was nineteen years of age when her father moved to St. Johnsbury. She attended the district schools in Waterford, and as her brother, my father, tells me, also attended the Essex County Grammar School, which was then a noted school in northern Vermont, under charge of Samuel Reed Hall as principal, at Concord.

February 22, 1831, she married William C. Boardman, who came to St. Johnsbury from Norwich, Vermont. He was a carpenter by trade, and he built a hotel in St. Johnsbury and attempted to keep a temperance house. I understand, however, that he was not successful, and abandoned this business and became a travelling salesman for the Fairbanks Brothers, who had then begun the manufacture of scales at St. Johnsbury. He also built a house, now owned by the St. Johnsbury Academy and occupied by the principal, and which stands next south of the present Academy building.

He had his home at St. Johnsbury until 1854, when he purchased of one Horatio N. Burnham, a place on the main street in Newbury, Vermont, where he and his wife went to live. It was a pretty little cottage, standing some distance back from the street on the east side, with an avenue of fir trees leading to it. December 25, 1855, this place was sold to Enoch Wiggins, and Mr. Boardman and his wife removed to Maquoketa, Iowa, where they settled in 1856, and continued to live until the death of my aunt, Mrs. Boardman, May 12, 1878, and the death of Mr. Boardman, April 28, 1884.

Both Mrs. Boardman and her husband were admitted by profession as members of the North Congregational Church at St. Johnsbury, November 13, 1831, during the great revi-

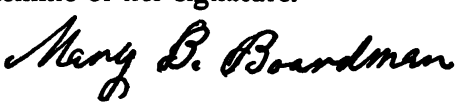
MARY BENTON 1809

val. October 16, 1851, they both removed by letter to the South Congregational Church at St. Johnsbury. They had no children, but in 1856, after the death of my mother, they adopted my sister, Mary Isabella Benton, who had been named Mary for her aunt, Mrs. Boardman. She died October 10, 1865, at Maquoketa, Iowa, and is there buried.

Both Mr. Boardman and my aunt were very thrifty people, and she was a woman of marked capacity for business. They accumulated a comfortable fortune before they went West, and retained it. I remember her very well. She came to Clinton, Michigan, in the winter of 1855–1856, after the death of my mother, and stayed with us for several months. This, I think, was on their way to Maquoketa, and when she left us she took my sister Mary with her to her new home. She was a large, fine-looking woman, particular in dress, not very attractive or amiable in disposition, but inclined to manage her amiable husband and everybody else with whom she came in contact. She had not the love of reading and books of her sister Esther, but liked affairs and business, and was always active in church and social matters.

She was afflicted for years before her death with a disease which compelled her to spend much time in the East for treatment, and she died at Newbury, Vermont, May 13, 1878. Her sister, Mrs. Kinney, attended and cared for her in her last illness. Her remains were taken to Maquoketa, where she was buried by the side of my sister Mary, to whom she was much attached.

The following is a facsimile of her signature.



She was an active teacher in the Sunday-school of the Congregational Church at Maquoketa for many years, and the following resolutions were passed upon her death:—

¶ *Resolutions passed by the Officers and Teachers of the Congregational Sunday-school, Maquoketa, Iowa, upon the death of Mrs. W. C. Boardman:*

Whereas, It has pleased the Master to call our fellow-teach-

, William C. Boardman, to a higher sphere of labor, MARY
ny years of usefulness both in our Sabbath-school and BENTON
church; and 1809

reas, The active Christian life and peaceful death of
laborer in the Lord's vineyard presents to us very
essons which we gladly cherish; therefore

lved, That our school, by the removal from our midst
h of a worthy and beloved teacher, has met with a
ich it will be hard to fill; a loss which even the young-
mber will most deeply appreciate.

e has left us the legacy of an example of active Chris-
fulness and well doing, of right purpose and good in-
, which we may all well copy.

While we deeply sympathize with our brother, W. C.
an, in the great loss of his present bereavement, we
He, who does not willingly afflict any of us, has or-
this dispensation of His Providence, and this present
ion was necessary that we may meet in a higher and
world. The Lord's will be done.

lved, That a copy of these resolutions be presented
ther Boardman by our Superintendent, as a slight rec-
n of our respect and esteem for our departed fellow-
.

picture of Mrs. Boardman is from a photograph in
session, which I think was taken about 1858.

husband had no special business except the care of
perty after he went to Maquoketa, and at his death
ied in Mt. Hope Cemetery by the side of his wife and
dopted daughter Mary.

Mary Benton Boardman
1858

er, Mrs. William C. Boardman, to a higher sphere of labor, after many years of usefulness both in our Sabbath-school and in our church; and MARY BENTON 1809

Whereas, The active Christian life and peaceful death of such a laborer in the Lord's vineyard presents to us very many lessons which we gladly cherish; therefore

Resolved, That our school, by the removal from our midst by death of a worthy and beloved teacher, has met with a loss which it will be hard to fill; a loss which even the youngest member will most deeply appreciate.

2. She has left us the legacy of an example of active Christian usefulness and well doing, of right purpose and good intention, which we may all well copy.

3. While we deeply sympathize with our brother, W. C. Boardman, in the great loss of his present bereavement, we know He, who does not willingly afflict any of us, has ordered this dispensation of His Providence, and this present separation was necessary that we may meet in a higher and better world. The Lord's will be done.

Resolved, That a copy of these resolutions be presented to Brother Boardman by our Superintendent, as a slight recognition of our respect and esteem for our departed fellow-teacher.

The picture of Mrs. Boardman is from a photograph in my possession, which I think was taken about 1858.

Her husband had no special business except the care of his property after he went to Maquoketa, and at his death was buried in Mt. Hope Cemetery by the side of his wife and their adopted daughter Mary.

Elizabeth Benton

1813–1887

Elizabeth Benton

1813–1887

SHE was the fourth daughter and the seventh child of Samuel Slade and Esther (Prouty) Benton, and was named for her father's sister Elizabeth, who married Silas Gridley. She was born February 1, 1813, and was about fifteen years old when her father moved to St. Johnsbury. I cannot ascertain that she ever attended any schools except the ordinary district schools, with perhaps an occasional term at the Academy. She was of a domestic rather than a studious disposition. January 24, 1833, at St. Johnsbury, Vermont, she married Elisha Kinney of Waterford, son of Amos and Susan (Grow) Kinne, who was born at Waterford, Vermont, May 8, 1807. Their children were: —

HARRIET, born at Waterford, Vermont, December 25, 1833, who died March 13, 1838, at Waterford, Vermont.

AMOS BENTON, born at Waterford, Vermont, December 31, 1836.

MILO, born at Waterford, Vermont, May 29, 1839, who died June 21, 1842, at Waterford.

ELLEN ELIZABETH, born at Newbury, Vermont, June 19, 1845.

WILLIAM CARLOS, born March 15, 1847, at Hartford, Vermont.

LAURA EMELINE, born December 25, 1848, at Hartford, Vermont.

JACOB BENTON, born May 23, 1856, at West Newbury, Vermont.

SUSAN GROW, born November 25, 1857, at Orfordville, New Hampshire, who died July 21, 1878, at Coventry, Vermont.

She was admitted to the North Congregational Church of St. Johnsbury by profession July 10, 1831, when she was eighteen years old, in the great revival. Her husband was also a member of that church, and "ordained" deacon at Hart-

Mary Benton

1809–1878

Jacob Benton

1814–1892

Jacob Benton

1814–1892

HE was the fourth son and the eighth child of Samuel Slade and Esther (Prouty) Benton, and was born at Waterford, Vermont, August 19, 1814. He was named for his uncle Jacob Benton. His grandfather and great-grandfather were also named Jacob. When he was fourteen years old his father removed to St. Johnsbury, and he remained at home working on the farm, with ordinary district schooling and a term or two at the Academy at Lyndon or Peacham, until he was of age, in August, 1835, after which he supported himself by labor and teaching district schools. In 1836 and 1837 he and his brother Josiah attended the Randolph Academy, of which their brother Samuel was then principal, and boarded with William Nutting, the village lawyer, whose daughter their brother Samuel afterward married. Dr. H. G. Nutting, now living at Randolph Centre, Vermont, remembers them at that time.

In 1838 they both attended the Burr and Burton Seminary at Manchester, Vermont. But there were no catalogues in those days and the only thing found upon the record is that in March, 1838, Jacob Benton paid "tuition $5., rent $1.50, incidentals $3.75" and that Josiah paid "tuition $6., rent $2.25, incidentals $3.75," the $6 tuition being "paid from the fund," which means that he was studying for the ministry, and could therefore have his tuition paid from the fund which had been established to aid such students. They do not seem to have been boarders at the Seminary boarding-house, where the charge for board at that time was $15.12 for fifteen weeks. Sixty-seven boarders with the steward and wife were boarded for fifteen weeks at a cost of $829.93, and credited with $369.48 for labor during the same time. The accounts show that ham, pork, flour, molasses, and milk were the staples, and that butter was an "extra." These I apprehend were substantially the conditions of ordinary student

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life in Vermont at that time. I understand Jacob graduated at Burr and Burton Seminary in 1839, but the record of the school at that time is not to be had.

In the fall of 1840 he opened a private school at Concord, Vermont, which he taught for two or three years. His brother Josiah was with him and taught writing classes a portion of the time. During this time he continued the study of the law as a student with Henry A. Bellows, then of Littleton, New Hampshire, and afterwards justice and chief justice of the Supreme Court of New Hampshire. In the spring of 1843, when he was twenty-nine, he went to Lancaster, New Hampshire, and entered the office of General Ira Young, then a leading member of the bar at that place; and when admitted to the bar in July, 1843, he became a partner of General Young, and remained so until 1845, when General Young died. He then continued the practice of law alone until 1855, when Ossian Ray became his partner and remained such till 1865. In the fall of 1866 his nephew, J. H. Benton, Jr., became his partner, and remained so until 1871. From that time until 1885 he practised law alone, and in 1885, 1886, and 1887, H. I. Goss was his partner, after which he continued practice alone until his death, September 29, 1892. He was a member of the bar and in practice nearly fifty years in Lancaster.

He was a member of the First Congregational Church in St. Johnsbury, Vermont. July 10, 1831, he was admitted to the North Congregational Church at St. Johnsbury, from which he was excommunicated February 17, 1846, because after he went to Lancaster he did not join the Congregational Church there. This was in accordance with the custom in such cases at that time in the Congregational churches in Vermont, and did not imply any misconduct except neglect to join the church in the new place of residence.

But although he was not a member of the church at Lancaster he was a man of religious temperament, and a regular attendant upon the Congregational Church all his life. In his youth he was fond of music, and I am told led the church choir in Lancaster for some years after he went there. He was quite a constant reader of the Scriptures, and I remem-

ber that it was his custom in the latter part of his life to read the Scripture before he retired, although he very seldom talked about religious matters. JACOB BENTON 1814

In politics he was an earnest, active, persistent partisan, originally a Henry Clay Whig, then a Republican, and active from the formation of that party until the time of his death. In the years 1854, 1855, and 1856, he was a member of the New Hampshire House of Representatives from Lancaster, and was very prominent and active. In 1860 he was a delegate from New Hampshire to the Republican Convention at Chicago, which nominated Lincoln for President. He served as chairman of the committee on credentials, and was quite prominent in the convention. January 9, 1867, he was nominated by acclamation as the Republican candidate for Congress in the Third New Hampshire District, and was elected, and in 1869 he was reëlected, and served four years as member of Congress from that District. He was interested in military affairs, and was at one time a brigadier-general in the militia, from which he was frequently called "Gen. Benton." He was always active in town affairs, though he did not hold a town office except, I think, acting occasionally as moderator of the town meeting. He was fond of agriculture, and I think never enjoyed himself more than when engaged in improving a rocky piece of land, or raising fine crops. He always had a farm or two on his hands, apparently for amusement, as I think he never had any profit from them. He was fond of horses, and always insisted on having the best.

December 12, 1860, he married Louise Dwight, the oldest daughter of Neal and Maria Cornelia Durant (Maynard) Dow, at Portland, Maine. She was born at Portland, March 23, 1831. They had no children, and she outlived him several years and died December 7, 1895, at Lancaster, New Hampshire. He died at Lancaster, September 29, 1892, at the age of seventy-eight, and is there buried. His death was caused by an accident. He wished to go from his house to the railroad station to say good-by to a party of friends who had been stopping with him and were then going away to the West, and directed his man to bring out a horse so that he

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could drive. One of his horses was spirited and not safe, and of course this was the one he liked the best. When the man brought out a quiet horse he scolded him roundly and told him to bring out the other one, which was done, and he drove to the station. Coming back the horse took fright, but probably, as Mr. Benton was a very superior horseman, no trouble would have occurred if the bit had not broken in the horse's mouth, when he ran away, throwing Mr. Benton out, breaking his hip, thigh, and arm, and fracturing his skull. He became at once unconscious, and died in a few hours.

This is a facsimile of his signature to a letter to me in 1867.

Jacob Benton was a large, powerful man, more than six feet in height. In his youth he was "long, lean, and green," as I have been told by those who knew him then. In middle life he grew to be a very handsome man, and kept his erect and vigorous carriage even in old age. He was a strong, dominant, aggressive personality. He and his friends and clients were always right, and everybody else wrong. He was not scholarly in his tastes, but had strong legal instincts, and an excellent natural sense of justice. He was open, honest, and bold in all his dealings and conduct, and hated shams and subterfuge. He was not a profound or great lawyer, but he usually knew sufficient law for his case, and in that indescribable quality which may perhaps be called "generalship," in the marshalling of facts and management of witnesses, parties, jurors, and the court,—in all the qualities which go to make up the great jury lawyer, he was without a superior, if, indeed, he had an equal at the bar where he practised.

He made strong friends, and was loyal to them. He made bitter enemies, and was consistently and persistently hostile to them. He was for more than a quarter of a century easily the leading figure at the bar, in politics, and in town and so-

cial life in the town and county where he lived. The following resolution and remarks of the bar, upon his death, give a very fair idea of his character and qualities:— JACOB BENTON 1814

"The members of the Coös County Bar desire to place on the records of this Court their appreciation of the life and character of their late brother, the Hon. Jacob Benton, and the fact that in his sad and tragic death they lose one of their oldest and strongest members; a man of remarkable force, unlimited professional resources, unusual mental endowments, great physical vigor, and a citizen who never failed to fill with honor the high positions to which his countrymen called him."

Remarks were made in part as follows:—

By the Hon. B. F. WHIDDEN.

I RISE as the oldest member of the Coös Bar present to move the passage of the appropriate resolution in regard to the death of our deceased brother. The news of Mr. Benton's sudden and violent death created a profound sensation among all classes in the community. It was a shock felt by all. Perhaps no man in the town was better known than he. He has been a resident here for more than a generation, taking an active part in all business relations, both public and private in town, and in this sudden announcement all seemed struck dumb in the presence of death. In this calamity we are assured that the terrors and sufferings common to the approach of the great destroyer, death, were mercifully spared our deceased brother, so that he passed to the land of the Hereafter without a struggle or a pain. Perhaps no member of this bar feels the weight of this sudden blow more forcibly than myself, or is reminded more distinctly of the certainty and nearness of death. We were admitted to this bar at about the same time, and have been longer in practice together than any living members of the Coös Bar. We have been on intimate terms and relations since 1846. . . . In our long practice in this court together our social relations have always been friendly. I always found him a strong opponent and an able assistant. He was an able advocate before the jury. He seized upon and marshalled his strong

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points with great power. He was a man of decided opinions and fearless in expressing them. He had his likes and his dislikes. He was a warm friend, and never deserted a friend or a cause he had espoused on principle. He was a good citizen and public-spirited man. The interests of the town were his interests. He was liberal and kind to the lowly and suffering, and this led him to espouse the cause of the black man, whose rights he defended with all his zeal and power.

"Though a scholar, he was not a bookman, in the ordinary acceptation of the term. He never relied on technicalities, but seized upon the great points in his case and urged them with great power and persistence. In his best efforts, before the court or in Congress, he exhibited a mastery of the subjects he discussed. As a citizen we shall miss his stately form on all public occasions. As a member of the bar we shall miss him in the court room, where he was jealous of his rights and contended for them with all his native force, eloquence, and tact. He had his faults, which is the common lot of all. Who has none?"

By Hon. Everett Fletcher.

"I have known Mr. Benton from my earliest childhood. For nearly thirty years I resided within a stone's throw of his home, and for nearly twenty years I occupied offices in the same building with him. During the last twenty-two years, since I have been a practicing lawyer, my association and intimacy with him have been almost as close as is possible between business men and lawyers in the same village. No one who knew Mr. Benton as intimately as we who are assembled here to-day, will deny that he was a man of great natural ability. We all know that he did not devote himself so exclusively to the law as many of us do. He was a farmer, a banker, a business man, in addition to his practice. I have no doubt but if he had devoted himself as entirely to the study and practice of the law as some who are present here have during their lifetime, he would have been numbered among the most distinguished jurists and advocates which New Hampshire has produced. When I say that he had not devoted himself so entirely to the study and practice of the law as many here, I do

not mean to be understood to say that he was not a formidable man in his profession and an advocate of unusual power. I do not believe in extreme eulogy, but I feel that it is always proper for us who have known intimately our departed friends to attest what we honestly and fairly can as to whatever was worthy and deserving of imitation in their qualities of mind and heart. JACOB BENTON 1814

"No one could be a better neighbor; nobody could be a more delightful companion socially than Mr. Benton. For four years he represented the State of New Hampshire in the national House of Representatives, and I know from those who were associated with him that he took high rank for a man who had so short a time to equip himself for the duties of a legislator.

"There was one thing that I have seldom heard mentioned, but which I always observed in Mr. Benton's mental make-up, and that is that while he did not have the advantages that many have to acquire a thorough academic education, he keenly and discriminatingly appreciated everything that was beautiful in literature. Mr. Benton's main source of strength, however, lay in the assurance and energy of his convictions, and in an almost unrivalled power of forceful and impressive statement and argument. These qualities he displayed not only in forensic contests in the courts, in which of late years he was not very frequently engaged, but in a marked degree in conversation upon the political questions dividing the country, in which he manifested to the end of his life an intense interest.

"Among the distinguished advocates and jurists which this Bar has numbered during the last half-century among its members, Mr. Benton was a unique and commanding figure. Among the public men and legislators of which this county has given to the counsels of the State and nation more than its full share, he was one of the foremost. He was a typical product of New England civilization and New England institutions.

"No man of so active and restless temperament as Mr. Benton, could have passed through life without committing some errors, without making some enemies.

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"You all know the tragic circumstances of his death:—

"Along the streets one day with that swift tread
He walked, a living king—then—'he is dead,'
The whisper flew from lip to lip, while still
Sounding within our ears, the echoing thrill
Of his magician's voice we seemed to hear
In notes of melody ring near and clear.

"So near, so clear, men cried, 'It cannot be!
It was but yesterday he spoke to me;
But yesterday we saw him move along,
His head above the crowd, swift-paced and strong,
But yesterday his plan and purpose sped;
It cannot be to-day that he is dead.'

"A moment thus, half dazed, men met and spoke,
When first the sudden news upon them broke;
A moment more with sad acceptance turned
To face the bitter truth that they had spurned.
Friends said through tears, 'How empty seems the town!'
And warring critics laid their weapons down.

"How at the last this great heart conquered all
We know who watched above his sacred pall—
One day a living king he faced a crowd
Of critic foes; over the dead king bowed
A throng of friends who yesterday were those
Who thought themselves, and whom the world thought, foes."

By Hon. C. B. JORDAN.

"I am in hearty sympathy with the sentiments already uttered by the brethren of the bar concerning the life of Hon. Jacob Benton. I have long regarded him as a remarkable man in many ways. He was a giant physically and intellectually. Not one man in ten thousand was so well equipped by nature for the battles of life as was he. Over six feet high, he towered above the ordinary man in stature, in force, and in mental vigor. He came of a strong race. He was born well. His mother was one of those strong Green Mountain women who imparted to her children something of her unimpaired strength of body and mind, and after their birth, excellent moral and spiritual training. Of her boys there were Reuben, Jacob, Josiah, and Charles—all talkers, strong and forceful in argument, sense,

and knowledge of men and affairs. And the next generation of Bentons exhibit the same traits and characteristics. There are Clark of Minneapolis, and his brother who so suddenly died last year in the same city, and Josiah H., Jr., of Boston, most excellent lawyers. Jacob, though born in August, 1814, was more erect in form and figure the day of his death than most men at fifty. . . . JACOB BENTON 1814

"It has been said here that he was not a learned man; that he had not the benefit of a college course, yet I find he was at Peacham and Lyndon academies, and then teaching at Concord, Vermont. He always expressed himself at the bar and elsewhere in choice language, with great force and clearness. He had an appreciation of poetry, literature, and art. . . . We have many monuments of this in the town where he lived fifty years lacking one. . . . Whoever met him met a foe worthy of his steel. His resources were unlimited; his tact knew no bounds. While he was always positive, tenacious, and sometimes belligerent, he had under all a great heart full of kindness for the unfortunate, and tenderness for the afflicted. Deep currents of religious feeling and sentiment found ample room under what sometimes seemed a harsh exterior of ambition and love of gain. I have often seen him bowed in grief over the sudden snatching away of the pearl of his heart, and the joy of his home. I have known him to give liberally of his money and sympathy to a neighbor who had lost his bosom companion. In his large soul was a place for gratitude, for kindness, and for the higher and better gifts and acquirements that go to make up a strong, noble character, as well as for the frailties of humanity which we all should be willing to forget against him whose lips are silenced by the cold touch of death."

The following is an estimate of Mr. Benton by an eminent lawyer and public man who knew him long and well: "He was in person tall, well proportioned, erect, with a frank and open countenance. His candor and courage corresponded with his look. His law business was large, his methods were manly and straightforward. In conducting litigation he had no inclination for the technicalities and subtleties which are by some mistakenly deemed the *indicia* of a great lawyer. He preferred to trust to the intrinsic merits of his case, and to

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meet his opponents in the open field, where no advantage was to be taken. In his forensic addresses he selected the strong points in controversy, and handled them with logical power and skill, calling to his aid a good-humored wit, which enlivened his speech and drove home his arguments and illustrations. His native shrewdness and knowledge of men seldom misled him as to what could be successfully attempted, and his never-failing tact enabled him to make the most of the mistakes of his opponent, while exposing himself as little as possible. Mr. Benton's powerful physique and prudent habits of life preserved his bodily and intellectual powers unimpaired to the last, and he was as capable of business at seventy-eight as in middle age." (Charles H. Bell, *Bench and Bar of New Hampshire*, p. 203.)

The accompanying picture is from a photograph taken when he was in Congress about 1869, and is an excellent likeness.

The following sketch of Mr. Benton's action in the State Legislature and in Congress is gathered from the legislative journals and records.

In 1854, as a member of the New Hampshire House of Representatives, he served on the committee on towns and parishes. This was the session of the great controversy over the repeal of the Missouri Compromise. Franklin Pierce of New Hampshire was President, and of the five members from New Hampshire three had voted for the repeal, and two only against it. Both House and Senate as elected were supposed to be Democratic by a small majority, and Democratic officers were elected in both branches, but early in the session, even before the appointment of committees, resolutions were introduced protesting against the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, approving the conduct of the two members who had voted against it, and condemning the conduct of the three members who had voted for it as being "in opposition to the wishes of the people of the State, treacherous to freedom and the great cause of equality and human rights." At that time there was a vacancy to be filled in the United States Senate, caused by the death of Charles G. Atherton, and a Senator to be chosen for six years. The

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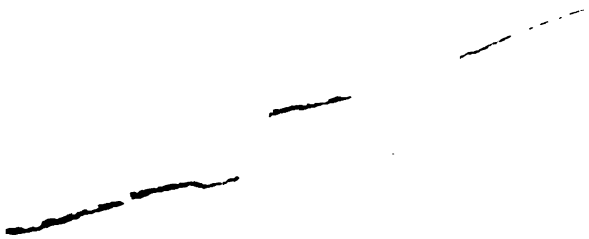

Democratic candidates for this position were John S. Wells of Exeter and Harry Hibbard of Bath, Hibbard being one of the members who had voted for the repeal of the Missouri Compromise. The Republicans, as the opposition were then beginning to be called, forced the discussion of these resolutions before the time for election of Senators, and then succeeded in postponing the election of Senators from time to time, and finally when the election came on it was impossible for the Democratic candidate to get more than one hundred and fifty votes in the House, while one hundred and fifty-five were necessary for election. Both Wells and Hibbard were chosen by the Senate, but the House, after repeated votes and ballots, made no choice. JACOB BENTON 1814

Debate on the resolutions in the meantime continued, being postponed from time to time for other business. The Democrats attempted to send the resolutions to a special committee, but this was defeated, and finally after about a month the resolutions were adopted by a small majority, and the House voted to postpone indefinitely the election of Senators. This result was accomplished, however, only by great effort and by the most careful organization, which was provided for by a committee of the Republican members, of which George W. Nesmith of Franklin was chairman and Jacob Benton was one of the most active members. In fact, Mr. Benton was so absorbed in this matter that I think he gave very little attention to other business, except to an endeavor to obtain the passage of an act to compel the Atlantic and St. Lawrence Railroad to build a branch of their road to Lancaster, as required by their original charter. He also opposed with success a bill favored by the delegation of representatives from Coös County for the removal of the shire town of that county from Lancaster to Northumberland.

In 1855 the Republicans had elected a majority of the House and the Senate, and there was no choice for governor, a majority being required. Mr. Benton was a member again and served on the judiciary committee, and as chairman of a special committee on matter of petitions for the removal of the sheriff of Rockingham County, and on a special

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committee to whom were referred resolutions proposed approving the veto by President Pierce of the Collins appropriation bill. He appears to have been very prominent and active during the entire session. He voted for resolutions approving a grant by Congress of land for the benefit of the indigent insane of the several States. He again attempted to procure the passage of a bill to compel the Atlantic and St. Lawrence to build a branch to Lancaster. At this session a special committee which had been appointed at the previous session, with authority to sit in recess and report the facts on this matter, reported. On this report there was a great controversy, but finally the matter was adjusted, as I understand, by the payment by the railroad company of a sum of money to the town of Lancaster, a portion of which was applied for the benefit of the Academy, and the remainder applied to the building of a hotel, which was always understood to be due to the persistent efforts of Mr. Benton, who represented the interests of his locality.

At this session the Republicans passed an address requesting the Governor to remove from office all or nearly all the judges of the Court of Common Pleas, police justices, sheriffs, solicitors, judges of probate and other Democratic officers, including even commissioners appointed to apportion the accounts of railroads partly in Massachusetts, and partly in New Hampshire. Mr. Benton favored all these removals and I think was recorded on every one of the numerous roll-calls during the session.

In 1854 an act was passed to amend the charter of the city of Concord by giving it power to prohibit the use of intoxicating liquors. This act the Governor vetoed on the ground that the Legislature had no power to prohibit the *use* of intoxicating liquors. Two hundred and fifty-one of the members voted *not* to pass the bill notwithstanding the veto, but Mr. Benton with four others voted in favor of the bill, being, as he said, clearly of the opinion that the Legislature had the power to prohibit such use if it desired. He also voted in favor of the passage of the act for the suppression of intemperance, over which there was a great controversy, but which was passed. He voted for an act to remodel the judi-

ciary system of the State, which was passed, and the main purpose of which was to get rid of the judges of the old courts, who were Democrats, and to get new courts with judges who should be Republicans. He was earnest in advocacy of the address for the removal of the sheriff, judge of probate, and register of probate of his own county, who, I believe, were all his personal friends, but were Democrats. The county itself was largely Democratic, and the majority of the representatives from the county were Democrats. Their influence in the House was so great that the address at first failed of adoption, but it was introduced and passed in the Senate, and then Mr. Benton obtained a majority in the House to concur, so that the officers were removed. Of course these removals were all political and reflected only the intense partisanship of the time. JACOB BENTON 1814

In 1856 he was again a member from Lancaster and served on the judiciary committee. He appears to have been still engaged in his controversy with the Atlantic and St. Lawrence Railroad Company, and to have introduced a bill with reference to that road. He advocated and voted for removals of the few solicitors and other Democratic officers who were not removed by address in the previous year. He served on a special committee of one from each county to consider "the late acts of violence and bloodshed by the slave power both in the territory of Kansas and at the national capital." This, of course, referred to the assault upon Senator Sumner of Massachusetts and the border outrages in Kansas. It is interesting to note that at the same time that he was acting upon a committee upon this matter in the New Hampshire Legislature his brother Reuben, as a member of the Senate in the adjoining State of Vermont, was chairman of a committee upon the same subject. He also served as member of the special committee upon the resolutions introduced in respect to the Monroe Doctrine, and the conduct of President Pierce in regard to relations with Great Britain and Denmark. He appears to have succeeded in having Republicans appointed as judge and register of probate for his county, for he presented petitions for an increase of their salary. He was also one of the active leaders of the Republicans in legislation and in debate.

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One of the most closely contested matters of the session was an address for the removal of Charles Doe, then a young lawyer and solicitor for Rockingham County. He was an earnest Democrat and had been assistant clerk of the Senate. The address was finally adopted, being passed by the Senate and concurred in by the House. Subsequently Mr. Doe became a member of the Republican party and served many years upon the Supreme Court, being for a long time chief justice.

Mr. Benton took the oath of office as representative in the Fortieth Congress, on March 20, 1867, being presented by James G. Blaine, and he served during that Congress on the committee on private land claims, and the joint select committee on retrenchment. In the Forty-first Congress he served on the standing committee on agriculture, the committee on invalid pensions, and the select committee on retrenchment. His first act was to present a resolution on March 30, tendering the "special thanks of the House" to General Sheridan for the removal of the attorney-general of Louisiana, the mayor of New Orleans, and the judge of the First District Court of New Orleans "from their respective offices, which they have disgraced, and the appointment in their places of men of character and loyalty, and that in this prompt and just action of General Sheridan the country has a guaranty that under his command the innocent will be protected, and the guilty punished, and the spirit of rebellion extinguished."

In the contested election case from the Second Kentucky District, he opposed and voted against the report of the committee on elections seating Mr. Brown, who had received about nine thousand votes, and in favor of seating a candidate who had received about three thousand. In his speech he claimed that as a majority of those who had voted for Brown had been engaged in the Rebellion they ought to be treated as having been thereby disfranchised, and their votes not counted. In this debate he had a sharp passage at arms with his old and intimate friend, Judge Poland of Vermont, who took the other view, even going so far as to call Judge Poland to order for his language. The report of the committee, however, was sustained, and Brown seated by a vote

of 102 to 30, Mr. Benton voting in the minority. He also advocated and voted for a bill placing additional persons, soldiers and sailors in the War of 1812, upon the pension list. JACOB BENTON 1814

December 7, 1867, Mr. Benton voted against the resolution reported from the judiciary committee, that President Johnson be impeached. The resolution was defeated, 108 to 57. Subsequently the committee on reconstruction reported a resolution of impeachment, for which Mr. Benton spoke and voted, and which was adopted February 24, 1868, by a vote of 126 to 47.

January 28, 1868, he introduced a bill "to make partial compensation for expenses incurred in the prosecution of the war by providing for the taxation of national bonds." This was practically following the platform of the Republican party in New Hampshire in the previous election. He advocated an amendment of the internal tax bill, increasing the proposed tax on real estate agents with an income of two thousand dollars from five dollars on each additional thousand dollars of income to ten dollars, saying: "It seems to me that the tax rate should be increased as the business increases. I think this is so plain that it requires no argument." But the amendment did not prevail. He also offered an amendment to the bill increasing the proposed tax on railroad and other transportation companies from two and a half per cent to three per cent on their gross receipts, saying, it was notorious that there was no more profitable business in the country than that. There was quite a running debate upon this amendment, which he advocated very earnestly, but the amendment was not adopted. In the contested election case from the Ninth District of Kentucky he again maintained his radical view that representatives chosen by voters who had been engaged in the Rebellion ought not to be seated. He advocated increasing the tax upon bank deposits, and opposed a tax upon bank circulation. He apparently took much interest in the bill for the refunding of the United States debt, and spoke in favor of provisions which he thought would confine the indebtedness as much as possible to the United States, saying that it was better for the

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government to owe five billions to its own citizens than one half that sum to persons in foreign countries, "for the payment of interest on a foreign debt draws out of the country the very life-blood of our currency."

He earnestly opposed, and in a very effective argument, the claim that the government should tax its bonds in the hands of foreign holders by deduction of the tax from the interest as paid, which was advocated by General Butler, then a member from Massachusetts, and by General Logan, then a member from Illinois, saying: "The government has issued its obligations to pay a certain amount of money and a certain rate of interest, and now it is maintained by the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. Butler) and other gentlemen that we can turn round and say to the foreign creditor (this is the plain English of it), we will pay you a portion of the interest, but another portion we will deduct and call it a tax. The gentlemen may think they are going to make a good deal of popularity out of such propositions, but if I am not greatly mistaken the high sense of honor which has always distinguished the American nation, will never countenance any such picayune repudiation. If I believed that we have a right to tax the foreign creditor I would vote to tax him, but I do not believe any such thing. Some gentlemen may attempt to make capital out of propositions such as that before us, but I would not for the sake of saving to the government tens or hundreds or thousands of millions sacrifice the honor, the integrity, the high standing of this government before the nations of the world. I believe that for every single cent we gain by sacrificing our national honor we lose immensely, immeasurably. I do not believe in any demagogical scheme. I believe in equal, just, and impartial taxation as far as we can; I do not believe in any repudiating schemes." He advocated a bill regulating the franking privilege, but opposed the bill to abolish it, saying that he thought any act to restrict or abridge the free intercourse between constituents and representative would be detrimental to the interest of the people. He advocated a law providing that no judge of the Supreme Court shall sit in the Supreme Court upon the hearing of any appeal or writ of error from any

decree or judgment of a circuit court in which he had participated as circuit judge, making a short but effective speech in favor of it, concluding with the statement that "while there have been judges who have been foremost in overruling their own decisions, judges are but men after all." JACOB BENTON 1814

In the debate upon the census act he proposed an amendment extending the time for taking the enumeration from thirty days to three months, which was defeated. He also advocated certain other amendments in regard to taking the census, calculated, he said, to make the enumeration more economical and accurate, but none of them were adopted. In the Forty-first Congress, in the debate upon the abolition of the franking privilege, he spoke in favor of the printing and circulating of the reports of the Department of Agriculture, saying that they were of great benefit in the agricultural districts, and that the distribution of seeds and of information through the Agricultural Department was in his judgment worth many times the cost of the franking privilege, but he said he was satisfied that although the House in the previous Congress decided against the repeal, he should then vote for the repeal because he believed that the large majority of the people called for it, and not because he believed their true interest demanded it. He spoke and voted against the seating of Mr. Booker, claiming a seat as representative from the Fourth District of Virginia, upon the ground that he was disloyal and ought not to be permitted to take the test oath even if he wished to, but Mr. Booker was seated by a vote of 89 to 72. He earnestly opposed a special bill for the pensioning of certain specified soldiers of the War of 1812, the general bill for that purpose passed by the House in the previous Congress having failed in the Senate. He said among other things that he was in favor of general legislation upon the subject and not of special legislation, picking out here and there cases no more meritorious than many others. He also said: "I know that it is a very popular hue and cry here to stand up and talk about pensions to soldiers. I have heard an honorable member of this House say that he has never voted against a pension bill. Now, he is acting on this floor as a representative, having charge of

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the people's money, and he has no business to vote for any pension unless it is a just and meritorious case."

He spoke against a proposition to amend the law so as to exclude all female clerks from the Departments, saying, "If any one expects to secure the passage of such a bill, I think he will find it a pretty large undertaking,—a very heavy job. Why? Because there are branches of business that females can do better than men. There are female clerks who are more skilful in the execution of their duties than any man could be. In many cases women have more natural aptitude and make better clerks. I undertake to say that where they can be employed in the public service more justly than men they will be employed, and I do not think the efforts of time-serving politicians will prevent it."

February 19, 1870, he spoke at length in the committee of the whole on the state of the Union, upon consideration of the President's annual message, and severely arraigned the Democratic party for its opposition to the war and to the results of the war. He also spoke at length in opposition to extravagance, which he said then existed both in public and in private life, saying, "We have been living beyond our means as a nation and as individuals. The remedy is in individual as well as national economy." He advocated reducing the number of officers in the army and large reductions in the navy, saying that the "expenses incurred for squadrons all over the world are as useless as they are enormous. The North Atlantic, the South Atlantic, Pacific, Mediterranean, African, East and West India and home squadrons swallow up yearly millions of the people's money, and they are all for show and nothing more. The pretence of affording protection to American commerce is false and fraudulent. The yearly cost of a single squadron is greater than all the property they have saved to the country since the foundation of the government." He discussed at length the financial situation of the government, advocating the protection of American industries for the benefit of American labor, and the exemption from taxation of articles of use and necessity, with increased taxation upon articles of luxury. This speech was widely circulated as a campaign document by the National

Republican Committee. In this speech he alluded in reply to questions from Mr. Niblack, one of the Democratic leaders, to the fact that Mr. Voorhees, then a member from Indiana, had been a member of the Knights of the Golden Circle, a secret treasonable political organization in Indiana; and the next day after the speech was delivered Mr. Voorhees called attention to this charge, and denied it, and when Mr. Benton produced a report of Judge Advocate General Holt, from the official files, showing the statement, Mr. Voorhees declared it was a false report, but Mr. Benton declined to withdraw his statement as made from the report, evidently believing the record to be correct. JACOB BENTON 1814

He also spoke in favor of a law reducing the number of special agents of the Treasury Department and against the bill of Mr. Jencks of Rhode Island to establish a civil service commission, saying, "My objection to this bill is that it takes power from the hands of the people to place it in the hands of a board of commissioners, and I hold that the more you remove power from the hands of the people the less democratic your government becomes." He said further against the bill: "This bill is offered as a grand panacea to remedy all the evils with which the body politic is afflicted by the mal-administration or mismanagement of the civil affairs of the government, and I consider it wholly inadequate to accomplish the ends for which it is recommended. No competent business man would adopt such a Utopian scheme as this for the purpose of determining the qualifications of the men he should employ, and the qualifications for office in the public service are just the same, and nothing more or less, as the qualifications required for the various business departments of life. Again, the bill ignores entirely the principle that the administration that has been elected to power shall have the opportunity to surround itself with its friends, not on the principle that 'to the victors belong the spoils,' but upon the principle that the administration shall appoint to sustain its measures those friendly to it and desirous to render it successful. I regard this scheme as a cunningly devised one for the purpose of keeping men out of office unless they belong to a particular, select, favored class, and of keeping men in office who have once secured positions."

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Upon the bill to grant pensions to the soldiers and sailors of the War of 1812 he spoke against an amendment providing that pensions should be given to persons who had acted in hostility to the United States during the Rebellion, but in favor of the bill, saying: "This measure failed two years ago to pass the Senate on the ground, I suppose, that it would cost something. Now, I have no sympathy with those men who would refuse pensions because they would cost something, nor have I any sympathy with that class of men, some of whom I see around me here, who would vote anything that is called a pension for a soldier. I would not grant pensions indiscriminately to men who served their country and to those who fought against it. I would make a distinction in favor of those who did not exert their influence against the government. That class of men I would pension, although they were within the limits of the rebellious States. But I would not indiscriminately pension men who fought to sustain the flag and men who fought against it, or whose influence at home was equivalent to taking the field in opposition to the government." He spoke in favor of retaining the income tax, to the end that the indebtedness of the government might be paid within a reasonable time, saying: "It is a tax in my judgment more equitable and just than any other tax that is imposed in the whole catalogue of internal taxation. . . . There is no class in this country so well able to pay the tax imposed by the authority of Congress as those who pay the income tax. The repeal of this income tax will reduce the amount collected to carry on the government and to pay the national debt by over thirty million dollars. Now, that amount devoted to the liquidation of the national debt would enable the government, in a comparatively short period of time, to extinguish the national debt altogether. . . . The gentleman from California says that we should lift the burden from the shoulders of the people by reducing taxation. I say that the best way to lift from the shoulders of the people the burdens they now sustain is to remove and extinguish entirely the debt which is the great cause of those burdens. . . . In what condition is this nation to-day to settle any difficulties that may arise, or to deal with

any insult that may be given to our national flag by any foreign power? Weighted down, crushed down, as we are, by a debt of two billion five hundred million dollars, we should have to pocket the insult as we did the insult offered to us by England during the war. We shall have no disposition to increase the debt by another war." JACOB BENTON 1814

He advocated the appropriation of forty-five thousand dollars for the improvement of the Connecticut River, to be expended in equal proportions in Connecticut, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire. He advocated also a law to provide for free banking upon a deposit of national bonds and redemption of bank circulation in gold. He spoke in favor of the bill to provide a national currency and equalize the distribution of circulating notes, and upon being asked if he was in favor of a gold currency then, said: "I am now, and at all times, as a basis. I am in favor of gold money and of paper convertible by the holder at his pleasure into the same; not rags, but redeemable paper. The people out West say they want more currency. If they had anything which would command these greenbacks they would get them in Chicago just as well as they would get them in New York or Boston. This proposition to issue more national bank notes, or more greenbacks, in order to inflate the currency and to supply what is needed out West, is, it seems to me, the most arrant nonsense that ever entered the minds of sensible men." Upon being pressed with questions as to whether he was in favor of greenbacks he said: "I think it was justifiable for the government to issue greenbacks as a war measure. They are a sort of forced loan with no security but the faith of the government. I want them redeemed now, or as soon as practicable, without sacrificing the business and laboring interests of the country, but I would have some time when the government should resume specie payments, when we should get somewhere near the reality of things, when we should approach what sensible business men sometimes call 'hard pan.' We have been floundering long enough, like a man in a balloon, afraid to approach the ground for fear of a collapse."

Mr. Benton also made a very earnest speech against the

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right of Mr. Booker to hold his seat from Virginia, on the ground that he had been a judge under the Confederate government, and had voted and contributed money in aid of the Rebellion, saying that it was impossible for a man to have done that and claim to have been loyal. This was in opposition to the report of the committee on elections by Mr. Brooks of Massachusetts. In this debate Mr. Benton appears to have led the opposition to the report of the committee, and in a very effective manner, putting the oath which Mr. Booker had taken as a judge to support the Confederacy side by side with the oath which he had taken as a member, that he had not been engaged in the Rebellion, or given aid or comfort to the enemies of the government.

In February, 1869, he spoke in favor of a resolution declaring that the manner of procedure of the President of the Senate in counting the vote of Georgia for President in obedience to the order of the Senate only, was an invasion of the rights and privileges of the House. In 1871, he again attempted without avail to obtain an appropriation for the improvement of Fifteen Mile Falls in the Connecticut River, saying that the commerce carried on the Connecticut was just as important as that carried by flatboats in the West. He opposed and spoke against a bill to increase the salaries of the judges of the Supreme Court from six thousand dollars to ten thousand dollars, but favored a smaller increase.

His last public service was as a member of the Convention to revise the Constitution of New Hampshire in 1876. He served on the Committee on Judiciary Department and was influential in the Convention. He spoke at length only twice, once in favor of a constitutional amendment to limit the right of trial by jury in certain cases, and again in favor of an amendment to reduce the membership of the House and increase the membership of the Senate. He voted against proposed amendments for minority representation, and for the election of judges of probate by popular vote.

The accompanying picture is from a photograph of Jacob Benton taken in Washington in 1868, and is an excellent likeness of him in his prime.

Josiah Henry Benton

1816

Josiah Henry Benton

1816

JOSIAH HENRY, the fifth son and the ninth child of Samuel Slade and Esther (Prouty) Benton, was born at Waterford, Vermont, August 8, 1816. His first name was a common name in the Benton family some generations before, and I think it was probably given him for that reason. The middle name of Henry was for his mother's mother, Mary Henry, a sister of Hugh Henry, of Vermont.

He was about twelve years of age when his father moved to St. Johnsbury. He worked on the farm and attended district school until he was about seventeen, when his brother Samuel, then a student at Amherst College, being at home on a vacation, persuaded his father to allow him to take the boy back to Amherst with him, and he there attended school and taught a small district school during one winter near Amherst. November 13, 1831, when he was fifteen years of age, and during the great revival in St. Johnsbury, he was admitted to the North Congregational Church by profession.

When his brother Samuel left Amherst and went to Middlebury College in 1834, Josiah came back and taught the district school at Derby Line, also in Windham, and then at Strafford and in Barre, Vermont. In the meantime he attended school, I think at the Peacham and Lyndon Academies, and in 1838 attended the Burr and Burton Seminary in Manchester, Vermont. He then taught school for three winter terms in Montpelier. He was a fine penman and taught writing in the Concord, Vermont, Academy for a time.

He was successful as a teacher and received twenty dollars a month for four months each term when he taught at Montpelier. This was then considered very high wages for "keeping school." His brother Jacob told me that he was very bright and much quicker to learn than he, Jacob, and he made rapid progress in his studies under the difficulties which surrounded him. He did not attempt to go to college, but studied theol-

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ogy with the Rev. Thomas Hall, pastor of the Congregational Church at Waterford.

August 12, 1841, he married Martha Ellen, daughter of David and Huldah Danforth of Walpole, New Hampshire, where she was born March 24, 1822. She was then teaching in Putney, Vermont, and they were married there by the Rev. Amos Foster. It will be observed that he was but twenty-five and she only nineteen years old when they were married.

In May, 1842, he received a license to preach, the original of which I have, as follows:—

AT a meeting of the Caledonia association held at Peacham May 4th 1842 Mr. Josiah Benton was examined for license to preach the Gospel, and it was voted that he be licensed to preach untill the meeting of this association on October next.
Daniel Merrill *Scribe*

THOMAS HALL *Moderator*

Peacham May 4th, 1842.

The following October he was given a permanent license. I have also the original of that license, which was—

AT a regular meeting of the Caledonia Ass. held at the house of the Rev. L. H. Stone in Cabot Oct. 11th, 1842, Mr. Josiah Benton, who had received from this Ass. a partial license to preach the Gospel, presented himself again before the body, to receive the regular form of license. The Association after consultation, & conversation voted that the usual Licensure be given to him to preach the gospel. The Ass. would recommend Mr. Benton to the Churches of our Lord & Saviour J. Christ, wherever God in his providence may call him.
Attest Thomas Hall *Scribe*

R. C. HAND, *Modr.*

Cabot Oct. 11th, 1842.

January 17, 1843, he was ordained by a council pastor of the Congregational Church at West Addison, known as "Addison Corner," Vermont, and he preached there until January, 1846, when the pastoral relation was dissolved by a council called at his request.

I have the original Minutes of the councils.

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West Addison, Jan. 17" 1843

IN compliance with letters Missive, a Council was convened at the Parsonage to dismiss their present Pastor Rev. John M. Frasin, to examine and ordain Mr. Josiah H. Benton in the work of the Gospel Ministry.

There were present, bearing credentials,

Rev'd Josiah F. Goodhue, & Dea. Almon Wolcott, Shoreham

Rev'd Dana Lamb, & Br. Wm. Rockwood Bridport

Rev'd S. L. Herrick, & Dea. I. N. Benedict Crown Point

Rev'd James Meacham, & Bro. Wm. H. Coukey New Haven

There appeared in behalf of the Church & Society Dea. D. V. Chambers, Bro. Oliver Dexter, Nathaniel Allis & George Evarts.

The Council was called to order by Rev. J. F. Goodhue who was chosen Moderator & Rev. J. Meacham Scribe. The parties agreed to proceed to business in the absence of part of the Council called. The Rev. Mr. Frasin & the Committee on the part of Church Society stated the reasons for his dismission, i. e. his health. After which the following Resolution was Unanimously adopted. Resolved that Rev. John M. Frasin be dismissed from his Pastoral relation to this people and be recommended to the churches as one every way worthy of their confidence. The Council received evidence that a call had been given by the Church & Society to Mr. J. H. Benton & had been accepted by him & that satisfactory provision was made for his support. They also received full testimonials of Mr. Benton's church membership & his license to preach the Gospel. They then proceeded to examine him on his General education, his Religious experience, & his knowledge of Theology, after which they gave an unanimous vote of satisfaction with the examination, & to proceed to assign the parts for the ordination, which was done as follows: Invocation, Reading the Scrip, & Introductory prayer was assigned to Rev. Wm. H. Coukey, Sermon to Rev. S. L. Herrick, Consecrating prayer Rev. Dana Lamb, Charge to

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Pastor Rev. J. Meacham Right Hand of Fellowship Rev. D. Lamb, Charge to the People Rev. J. F. Goodhue. Concluding prayer, Rev. J. M. Frasin. Benediction by the Pastor.

The Council adjourned to the Meeting house to-morrow at Eleven o'clock A. M.

The Council met pursuant to ad. mt. when the exercises were performed as assigned & Mr. J. H. Benton was ordained as Pastor of the Cong. Church of West Addison.

Attest: J. F. GOODHUE, *Mod.*
J. MEACHAM *Scribe.*

A COUNCIL called by letters missive, at the instance of Rev. J. H. Benton, pastor of the Congregational Church in Addison, Vt. for the purpose of inquiring into the expediency of dissolving the pastoral relation existing between said church and pastor, met according to request at the house of the Pastor, on Tuesday, the 20th day of January, 1846.

Members present from the churches, were

From Middlebry	Rev. Dr. Merrill DD.
	Rev. S. G. Cox.
Bridport,	Rev. Dana Lamb,
	Bro. Wm. Rockwood.
Vergennes,	Rev. Harvey F. Leavitt,
	Bro. D. C. Keeler.
Crown Point,	Deac. Reuben Smith.

Rev. Dana Lamb was chosen Moderator.

Rev. S. G. Cox Scribe

Council was opened with prayer by the Moderator.

1. It having been stated by Bro. Benton that since issuing letters calling the Council, the church had consented to unite with him, in referring the expediency of dissolving the pastoral relation subsisting between them to the present council, it was voted that we hereafter proceed as a Mutual Council.
2. A resolution was offered and adopted by the council to the effect following, viz.

Whereas the Articles of Addison Consociation provide for the assembling of the "Consociation," in case of certain differences of opinion, between the pastor and a church, rather than the calling of a *ex parte* council—therefore

Resolved that in all such cases, it is deemed important

always to convene the Consociation in preference to an *ex parte* council. JOSIAH HENRY BENTON 1816

3. Bro. Benton was then called upon to state his reasons for calling the Council, which were accordingly given.
4. The Committee of the Church then made a statement:
5. Inquiries were then made both of the Pastor and the committee of the church and answers given, after which it was voted that the Council be by themselves.

It was voted after deliberation and consultation, that the pastoral relation existing between the Rev. J. H. Benton and the Congregational Church & Society in Addison be and hereby is dissolved; and that nothing appearing against the moral character of Bro. Benton he be recommended to the churches, as a minister of Jesus Christ in good and regular standing.

By vote of the Council the minutes were accepted.

DANA LAMB *Moderator*
S. G. COX *Scribe*

Jan. 20th, 1846.

After leaving Addison he preached at Northfield, Vermont, and September 19, 1846, the Congregational Church there voted "to employ Rev. J. H. Benton for one year from the time he commenced his labors here provided we can raise such a salary as he will accept."

The limited resources of the church and the small compensation of ministers at that time are shown by the following record of the action of the church.

AT a meeting of the church Jan. 12, 1847

1st. Voted to give Rev. J. H. Benton a call to become their settled pastor, provided a sufficient Salary can be raised for his support.

2nd. Voted to raise a committee of three to circulate subscription papers for the above object.

3d. Voted the Standing Committee of the Church said committee, and also to extend to Mr. Benton a call in behalf of the church, if it shall be found practicable.

4. Voted to adjourn to the 2nd day of Feb. next at one o'clock P. M.

Feb. 2, 1847. Church met pursuant to adjournment. Voted

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to extend a call to Rev. J. H. Benton to become the settled pastor of the church, and the church obligate themselves to pay him a yearly salary of four hundred dollars. Provided he take the risk of one hundred dollars from the domestic Missionary Society, and should the church fail after a reasonable effort to make out the four hundred dollars as above they may have so far as may be necessary, the benefit of a yearly pastoral visit at a fair estimated value.

I certify that the foregoing is a true extract from the records of the church.

Northfield March 22, 1847. J. L. Buck, *Clerk.*

The four hundred dollars was subscribed and February 2, 1847, the church voted to "extend a call to Rev. J. H. Benton to become the settled pastor." March 24, 1847, he was installed as the pastor of the Congregational Church at Northfield with a salary of four hundred dollars from the church and one hundred dollars from the Home Missionary Society. He then had a wife and two young children, and on this small salary with no other resources he settled in Northfield and bought a pretty cottage, which I well remember, in the village. My parents lived the plain, frugal life of the time in Vermont. My father kept a good horse and had a large garden which he cared for and cultivated with his own hands. My mother did the household work and cared for her children with only occasional outside assistance. Their house was simply but sufficiently furnished, their fare was plain but wholesome, they dressed themselves and their children and entertained their friends suitably for their station in life, and yet by close economy lived well within their income.

The church was composed of members who were strict in their views as to the proper walk and conduct of church members, as is shown by the following record, a copy of which, certified at the time by my father as clerk, I have.

AT a regular church meeting the following complaint was presented to the church by Dea. S. Denny; Whereas brother Samuel Denny, Hiram Dwinnell, & others, members of the Congregational ch. in Northfield Vt. feel aggrieved

with brother J. L. Buck & his wife, sister Mary Ann Buck, for having participated in a dance holden in celebration of President Harrison's Inaugeration in the year 1841; & whereas the subject was once informally brought before the ch. & dismissed in consequence of such informality without having produced the desired results; & whereas they continue to advocate the right & propriety of church-members participating in such amusements, to the great injury, as we believe, of the ch. & the cause of Christ in this place; therefore we feel it a duty, imposed upon us by our covenant obligations, as well as from an earnest desire to promote their spiritual welfare, to take the course with them prescribed in the 18 chap. of Matthew. JOSIAH HENRY BENTON 1816

Signed SAMUEL DENNY
HIRAM DWINNELL

Northfield Mch 23d 1848.

A true copy J. H. Benton *Clerk.*

For the benefit of the few who may not be familiar with the Scriptures the passage referred to is printed:—

"*Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.*

"*But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.*

"*And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.*" *St. Matthew xviii.* 15–17.

My father was a popular, or as it was then expressed, an "acceptable" preacher and earnest and active in his profession. In May, 1849, when he was only thirty-two, he was chosen by the General Convention of the Congregational Churches of Vermont as its delegate to the General Convention of Michigan. As such he made a report, the original manuscript of which I have, as follows:—

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen of the Convention:

IT affords me especial pleasure to be the bearer of the fraternal regards and Christian sympathies of the brethren and

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fathers in Vermont to the brethren and fathers of Michigan. And this pleasure, I assure you, is not the less lively or tender, when I reflect that although I have traveled nearly a thousand miles since I passed from the extremest border of my own State, yet I find myself surrounded by what might not inappropriately be denominated an assembly of Vermonters. For, as I cast my eyes over this venerable body, I see many familiar faces — many the homes of whose early days, I am forcibly reminded, lie scattered among the narrow glens, over the rising hills, and on the mountain-tops of the Mountain State. And I trust I shall not be giving, what will be esteemed undue prominence to this thought, if I add, that the brethren at home, whom I have the honor this day to represent, feel a sincere and ardent pleasure — or rather I should say a deep and holy joy, as they remember that these sons of Vermont "went out from us" not "because they were not of us" but that they might establish, not here alone, but everywhere throughout the rapidly rising settlements of the infant West those pure principles that were passing dear to New England sainted dead — That they might found churches, patronize schools, and give permanence and security to the elements of a stern and austere morality — the morality of the Puritans, so much railed at, and yet so much above ridicule: It was that they might by their disinterested zeal and self-denying labors, prove themselves worthy of that exalted ancestry to which you and I, and all other good men associated with us in these labors of love, bear one common and precious relation. It is this view of the case which reconciles us to the withdrawal of so many of our best forces from the field in Vermont. We reflect that what is our loss, in this particular, is your gain.

The number of churches in Vermont is 189; of these 35 are destitute; whole number of members 19635. Number of ministers, including superannuated, presidents of Colleges, and preceptors of Academies, 211. Of these 97 are pastors, 53 stated supplies, and 61 unsettled. During the year ending June, 1848, there was a decrease of members in the Congregational churches of Vermont to the amount of 177. Though the statistical report for 1849 has not yet been made out,

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data that I have been able to obtain, I am
the net decrease of the last year, over and
ase, will be more than counterbalanced by
il, unobtrusive, and effective revivals that
an encouraging extent during the past win-
st 4 or 5 months God has seemed to be in
manner essentially different from what has
or many years past. The revivals appear to
unusual solemnity, by a ceasing from man,
on God. The pastoral relation is becoming
Temperance has made commendable prog-
past year. The various causes of benevo-
well sustained. These churches, with slight
hoped are "maintaining the unity of the
ds of peace." At the present time there is
greater harmony of views prevailing, and
ty of practice, than has been known for many
en in those churches which a few years since
ultra, it is believed there is an increased dispo-
urn, both in doctrine and practice, to the posi-
sages of former times—a vigilant inquiry after
hs accompanied by an earnest desire to walk in
re is also less asperity of feeling between the min-
lay members of these churches, and those belong-
ther kindred denominations, than has ever been
uring any period of our past history. It is thought
are beginning to heed practically, to some extent at
at vitally important precept, "See that ye love one
." And as we are not bigoted enough to claim that
the only true church, and therefore includes within its
he whole body of true believers, we feel bound to rec-
ge & fellowship as disciples of Christ all who bear the
ious impress of his moral image on their hearts.

n conclusion allow me to observe that it affords the Gen-
Convention of Vermont great pleasure to receive dele-
es from this body, and "to hear of your affairs, that ye
and fast in one spirit, and with one mind, striving together
or the faith of the gospel." Our prayer is, and shall ever be,
that like as the pure waters of your own noble lakes extend

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their favoring arms around you, so the great Being whom you serve may in all coming time throw around you the signal auspices of his most indulgent and constant care.

While in Michigan he preached at Clinton, then a growing town in the southern part of the State, and the people then wished him to become their pastor. He also met Rev. H. D. Kitchel, D.D., of Detroit, who strongly urged him to come to Michigan, and it was the following letter from him which finally caused my father to ask to leave the Northfield Church.

Detroit, July 18, 1849.

Bro. Benton,

WHAT can have become of you? Have you forgotten Michigan? And Clinton? I have been waiting and wondering. Today comes a letter from J. Estabrook of Clinton inquiring after you, saying that they raised the $500. with no difficulty, and wrote you so at once, & felt very happy in the prospect of your speedy coming. Waiting, no preaching, &c. they are anxious to know what is the case. Mr. E. states that he shall write you again this week. His Letter may have failed. I feel more than ever that here is the field for you. The Lord gave you singular favor and acceptance with that people, and all of us ministers greatly desire your coming. The break-up would involve trouble for a time, but the matter is of moment to justify it.

Write us immediately, and to them also.

One good hand has joined us, a Mr. Morgan of Conn. preaching at St. Clair. He is doing them good greatly. A New England minister can make a broad deep white mark here—worth a life to do it. *Come*—come over into Michigan and help us—and do not expect to sleep o' nights till you do—for we shall appear to you in visions, crying in your dreams, "*Come!*"

Therefore *Come*. Write. Much love.

H. D. Kitchel.

He was dismissed from the church at Northfield by a council called for that purpose, September 7, 1849, and went at once to Michigan. I was then six years of age and remem-

JOSIAH HENRY BENTON 1816

ber well the long and tedious journey by rail to the Erie Canal, then by the uncomfortable canal boat and lake steamer to Detroit and then by stage to Clinton. There were three small children,—myself, my sister Ellen, nearly three years old, and my sister Mary, an infant in arms. I remember the tearful parting from friends in Vermont, who never expected to see us again, we were going so far away into the distant West. It was a weary journey for the frail young wife and her little ones, but Clinton was safely reached at last, and there my father was installed as pastor, October 24, 1849. I have his original of the Minutes of the council, as follows:—

COUNCIL convened in the Basement of the first Congregational Church in the village of Clinton on the morning of Wednesday October 24, 1849, pursuant to Letters missive from said Church. The Rev. L. Smith Hobart, Pastor of the Congregational Church in Ann Arbor then read a letter missive convening the Council—the object being to install the Rev. J. H. Benton, late of Northfield, state of Vermont over said Congregational Church.

Present Rev. L. Smith Hobart Pastor of Congregational Church in Ann Arbor.

Rev. W. P. Wastell Pastor of Presbyterian Church in Clinton.

Elijah Peck Delegate from Congregational Church, Ann Arbor.

Charles Chandler Delegate from Presbyterian Church, Clinton.

On motion, Voted that the Rev. W. P. Wastell act as Moderator and Charles Chandler Clerk of said Council.

The Moderator then in accordance with usage opened the services with prayer.

The Rev. D. M. Bardwell, Pastor of the Congregational Church in Grass Lake and the Rev. J. M. Van Wagner, Pastor of the Congregational Church in Litchfield being present, were invited in accordance with the wish of the Pastor elect and of the committee of said Congregational in Clinton as also by a Vote of Council to sit as members of said Council.

The call to the Rev. J. H. Benton from the First Con-

JOSIAH HENRY BENTON 1816

gregational Church and Society in Clinton together with his acceptance of the same were presented and approved.

The result of Council dismissing him from his former Pastoral charge together with their commendation of him was then read and by vote of Council pronounced satisfactory.

On motion of the Rev. D. M. Bardwell, Voted—that the Moderator conduct the examination of the Pastor elect as regards his Theological views &c. after which on motion of the Rev. L. Smith Hobart, it was voted that the examination of the Pastor elect be sustained, which motion was carried *unanimously*.

The following order of Exercises for the Installation of the Rev. J. H. Benton was then arranged viz:

Invocation and the reading of Scripture by Rev. A. B. Dunlap of Saline.
Singing—by the Choir
Prayer—by Rev. John Booth of the Baptist order
Singing—
Sermon by Rev. L. Smith Hobart
Installing Prayer by Rev. W. P. Wastell
Singing.
Charge to Pastor by Rev. W. P. Wastell
Right hand fellowship by Rev. D. M. Bardwell
Charge to the People by Rev. J. M. Van Wagner.
Singing.
Benediction by the Pastor—Rev. J. H. Benton.

There being no further business before the council—the Rev. D. M. Bardwell in accordance with the request of the Moderator made the closing prayer, after which the Council was dissolved by a vote thereof.

CHARLES CHANDLER, *Clerk*

October 2, 1849, my father purchased for $2200 a farm of eighty acres with a new square story-and-a-half house about half a mile from the church and the centre of the village. It was on slightly rising ground and there was a fine orchard and garden. It had been improved by an Englishman of some means, and a portion of the farm was cleared and cultivated, and fruits and flowers grew in great variety and profusion. But

the country was full of malaria. Everybody had the ague, or as they called it, "the shakes," and quinine, then taken in the form of powders, was an article of daily diet. We all, however, after a time became "acclimated," but my mother was frail and the care of her young family with the duties of the "minister's wife" broke down her health. She struggled bravely to keep up but was sick at heart for the hills of Vermont and the home of her childhood. JOSIAH HENRY BENTON 1816

When my father went to Clinton the "Plan of Union," or the union of Presbyterian and Congregational churches had still adherents in the West, and as there was a Presbyterian Church in Clinton it was proposed that they unite with the Congregational Church. He was opposed to this, but a majority of the society favored it, and in May, 1851, the union was effected. I have before me the original Minutes of the council approving the union and dismissing the pastor. They are as follows:—

AT a meeting held at Clinton, May 29th, 1851, of Ministers and Delegates invited to remain after the close of the General Association of Michigan, by Rev. J. H. Benton and a Committee of the Congregational Church and Society of Clinton, for the purpose of acting as an Advisory Council in relation to the dismission of Rev. Mr. Benton from his pastoral office, there were present,

Rev. H. D. Kitchel,	of Detroit.
Rev. Wm. W. Atwater,	" Lima.
Rev. E. N. Bartlett,	" Olivet.
Rev. G. L. Foster,	" Jackson.
Rev. D. L. Eaton,	" Farmer's Creek.
Rev. James M. Van Wagner,	" Litchfield.
Rev. L. Smith Hobart,	" Ann Arbor.
Br. Munson Wheeler,	" Ann Arbor.
Rev. George Barnum,	" Medina.
Br. Amasa Converse,	" Medina.

Rev. G. L. Foster was chosen Moderator, and Rev. L. Smith Hobart, Scribe; after which the Council adjourned for tea.

In the evening the Council convened and was opened with

JOSIAH HENRY BENTON 1816

prayer. It was then stated to the Pastor and Committee that this Council was not to be regarded as an ecclesiastical body, not being convened by letters missive. The Pastor and Committee declared their willingness to waive all informality or want of conformity to Congregational usage in the calling, and to accept the action of the Council as conclusive.

Statements were then made by the Committee and by Rev. J. H. Benton, showing that a proposition had been made by the Presbyterian Church and Society, to the Congregational Church and Society, for an union of the two; that the proposition involved the preliminary condition of a dismission of Rev. Mr. Benton from his present pastoral charge,—and that the prospects of a cordial and permanent union were of the most promising kind.—There was also presented to the Council a written copy of the above named proposition, being a Preamble and Resolutions unanimously adopted by the First Presbyterian Society of Clinton at their meeting held May 13th, 1851.

After a full examination of the subject, and expression of views by the members of the Council, Rev. Messrs Kitchel, Hobart, and Foster, were appointed a Committee to prepare a Result of Council. After a short recess, the Committee reported the following Result, which was accepted and unanimously adopted:—

It is with mingled feelings of joy and grief that this Council learn the condition of things in which they are called to advise. On the one hand we learn with the sincerest pleasure, the desire for union which has sprung up, and seems to pervade both the Presbyterian and the Congregational Church in this place. And we concur heartily in the conviction, to which the Spirit of Peace we trust, has led the membership of these churches, that their religious comfort and spiritual prosperity, and the honor and prevalent power of the Gospel in this community, do call urgently for the union contemplated. And we pray and trust that a spirit of grace and wisdom will continue to prevail among the members of these churches, and of the societies connected with them, until a perfect and harmonious union, and all the fruits of peace shall be realized among them. And we would impress

JOSIAH HENRY BENTON 1816

it on the members of the Congregational Church, as in our apprehension, the high duty now devolved upon them, to carry out with singleness of heart the spirit of union and fraternal tenderness, which seems to have prevailed hitherto. And it is our prayer that the united body which is to result from this movement, may walk together in the fellowship of truth and godliness, with abundant blessing from the Head of the Church.

On the other hand, we look with pain upon the necessity which seems to be involved in this movement that our beloved Brother, the Pastor of this Church, should sacrifice the relation which he now holds. We sympathize with him in the unhappy interruption which this will occasion in his labors. But we feel constrained, after a patient hearing the case, in the points that seemed needful to a just conclusion, to concur in the conviction, expressed to us, both by him, and his church, that the high interests of the christian cause demand the sacrifice. We do therefore, as an advisory body, counsel to the proposed dissolution of the relation now existing between him and this people.

In coming to this result, the Council desire to testify their unabated confidence in Rev. J. H. Benton, as an able and faithful Minister of Christ, sound in the faith, and irreproachable in his life. And in parting with him from the field in which he has here labored, and in which we have prized him as a beloved fellow-laborer, we heartily commend him to the churches of our Lord, as worthy of their fullest confidence; and we hope in the Providence of God, he may speedily be placed in some other portion of this wide field.

It was then voted that the Minutes of this Council be preserved by the Scribe, and that a copy be left with the Clerk of the Congregational Church, and also with the Rev. J. H. Benton. It was also voted that the Scribe be requested to furnish the *Independent* and the *N. Y. Evangelist* each with a brief notice of Br. Benton's dismission.

The Council then united in prayer, and adjourned *sine die*.

G. L. Foster, *Mod.*
L. Smith Hobart, *Scribe.*

Clinton 29th. May, 1851.

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This is a facsimile of his signature to the copy of the record of the Northfield Church in 1848, found on page 255, *ante*.

In 1851 he was the delegate from the General Convention of Michigan to the General Convention of New York. I have his original report to the Convention, as follows:—

Moderator and brethren of the Gen. Ass. of N. Y.

I HAVE been highly gratified during the few hours that I have been with you in listening to the interesting and instructive reports that have been communicated from the different localities that are here represented. I may say also without adulation or ostentation that I take especial pleasure in being the bearer of the fraternal regards and Christian sympathies of the brethren and fathers of Michigan to the brethren and fathers of New York. And though I am admonished by what I heard in this place yesterday from one of those white-haired men (Dr. Lansing) whom I delight to honor, that the appellation of father to the senior portion of the Christian ministry is not altogether in good taste in this latitude, yet the venerable brother—for I will so denominate him if the term be more agreeable—will pardon me when I assure him that this form of speech is employed not because I love the brethren less but the fathers more. I remember also that the practice is sanctioned by apostolic precedent. "Though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ yet have ye not many fathers." I am, however, sir, still further admonished that this honorable appellative may seem inappropriate when applied to any portion of the ministry of a state so recently settled as the one which I have the honor to here represent. Still, sir, there are from various causes fathers with *us* as well as with *you*. Some of these have been made such by the natural order of events, and some have been prematurely made such by evidencing "hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ." Yes, brethren of the Empire State, to whom the lines of your earthly Zion have fallen in more cultivated and therefore in less exhausting scenes, it is well for you to

know that there are brethren with us whose raven and auburn locks have been suddenly bleached by being "in labors more abundant," and in some sense "in stripes above measure." But, sir, although the work of the ministry in the newly settled regions of our country is more laborious, yet is it not on that account less desirable in any light of which it is capable of being viewed. Not only is it a work of pressing importance, nay, indispensable necessity, but, sir, it is a good work, and those of us who have the greatest obstacles to contend with, are far from being disheartened. Sir, of all other men, the Christian ministry have not, as it would seem, the greatest, but the least reason for discouragement. We labor, sir, not for the poor inducements of money and lands, or the vain rewards of popular noises and empty fame, but for the great stake of eternal life in the paradise of God.

JOSIAH HENRY BENTON 1816

November 21, 1851, he was installed as pastor of the Congregational Church at Port Huron, Michigan, where he preached until October 24, 1853, when he lost his voice by bronchial trouble, and went back to his farm in Clinton. My mother was then in feeble health and October 8, 1855, she died and was buried at Clinton. He was left with a family of four children, the oldest twelve and the youngest less than two years old. March 28, 1856, he sold his Clinton place for $3800 and in the following summer went back to New England.

November 9, 1856, he married Harriet Buxton, daughter of Nathaniel and Silence (Sawyer) Niles, at Newbury, Vermont, and in the winter of 1856–57 he preached in the Congregational Church at Orfordville, New Hampshire.

But his health was not good and June 3, 1857, he purchased a farm in Bradford, Vermont, of his brother-in-law, Elisha Kinney, for $2250, and went there to live. He remained on this place as a farmer until December 17, 1864, when he sold the farm to Adams Wilson for $2800. He then exchanged another hill farm that he had bought of his father-in-law, Deacon Niles, in Newbury, for a large farm in Maidstone, Vermont, known as the "Dr. John Dewey Place." For this he paid $10,000, which placed him in debt about $5000.

JOSIAH HENRY BENTON 1816

In 1865 he moved to the Maidstone farm, where he lived and carried on his farm, gradually paying off his debt and building a house, barns, etc., until October 14, 1897, when he sold it to his son, Samuel Slade, and moved to a small place which he then purchased in the village of Lancaster, New Hampshire, where he now lives.

August 17, 1861, at the reception given by the people of Bradford, Vermont, on the return of the Bradford Guards, who had served as a company of the First Regiment of Vermont Volunteers under the call for three months' troops, he made the address of welcome. It was concise and appropriate, carefully written and memorized, and not read but spoken exactly as written.

I have the original, as follows:—

To the Bradford Guards:

IT becomes my pleasant duty to address a few words of appropriate greeting and cordial welcome to our returning fellow-citizens, the Bradford Guards.

Capt. Andross and your associates in command, together with the loyal and true men who have served under you; well do most of us who are assembled here remember the sentiments and sympathies which struggled in our breasts on the eve of your departure for the theatre of war. If on that occasion we had reason to be proud of the firmness of your tread and the manliness of your bearing, much more to-day, as we look upon your hardened frames and your countenances which have become bronzed in honorable service for the safety of the Republic.

Citizen soldiers of the Mountain State, your safe return to us and with unbroken ranks save by the ordinary visitations of mortality, is but another illustration of that familiar maxim, "Fortune favors the brave!" Why should not all men be brave, disinterested, and self-sacrificing? Is there not a heartfelt pleasure in the remembrance of duties nobly met and well-performed? Nay, is there not a solid satisfaction in the present and prospective discharge of all honorable and useful service? Miserable must be the heart that has no sunny memories of childhood and home, no endearing recollections

of kindred and friends, binding them to their native land with more than a common love of life! On the other hand, happy, thrice happy and honorable is the man whose heart is *big* and *strong*, and *brave* enough to peril its life as you all have done in defence of home and country! JOSIAH HENRY BENTON 1816

At the commencement of this long-premeditated, deep-laid and extensive conspiracy for the overthrow of our government and the destruction of our liberties, while as yet there was no competent defence for the Capital nor the country, more fortunate than the rest of your fellow-citizens in the possession of some degree of military skill and knowledge, and animated by the same spirit which at the sublime opening of the Revolution pitted a handful of your country-men against the whole power of the British Lion, you at once volunteered your services till such time as an adequate military force could be raised and placed upon a permanent footing.

Such a force has at length been constituted, and you, having served out the full term of your enlistment, have been honorably discharged; and it now remains only for me, deputed expressly for the purpose, to speak that welcome which we all feel. I announce your welcome! You have already been welcomed by methods more decisive and significant than any mere form of words can express. Else what means the reiterated and continuous booming of the loud-mouthed cannon? What do we signify by those incessant and prolonged cheers which have shaken the solid ground upon which we tread; and which are now only waiting for my poor words to cease, when they will ring out again in tones that shall echo from earth to heaven, and from heaven back again to earth! Comrades, in the name of that country whose flag you have contributed to uphold, I thank you for your valuable services, and again bid you welcome to your former homes and your waiting friends.

He was a delegate from the town of Maidstone to the Constitutional Convention of Vermont, which met June 8, 1870.

The Journal shows that his first act was to move to amend a resolution that the "President be requested to call on the clergymen delegates of this Convention to officiate as chap-

JOSIAH HENRY BENTON 1816

lains of this Convention by rotation, commencing with the oldest clergyman," by striking out all after the word "Resolved," and inserting "that the President be requested to invite the resident acting clergymen of Montpelier to officiate in rotation as chaplains of this Convention during its session." This amendment was adopted. On the proposed amendment that "private corporations should not be created nor their powers increased or diminished by special laws," he voted in the negative, and the amendment was rejected. On the amendment providing for biennial sessions of the Assembly and biennial elections of State and County officers, he voted in the negative. The first vote upon this amendment was 119 to 114. Subsequently upon a motion to reconsider he voted for the reconsideration, which was had by a vote of 118 to 116, but the amendment was again adopted by a vote of 118 to 115, Mr. Benton voting in the negative.

On the amendment to provide that the judges of the Supreme Court should be appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate, Mr. Benton was one of two only who voted in the affirmative, the vote being 2 in the affirmative and 231 in the negative. On the amendment giving the suffrage to women he voted in the negative, the vote being 1 in the affirmative and 233 in the negative. On the amendment abolishing the Council of Censors and providing that amendments to the Constitution should originate with the General Assembly, and that the power to impeach public officers should be given to the House of Representatives upon a two-thirds vote, he voted in the negative, the amendment being adopted by a vote of 123 to 85.

This Convention rejected a resolution to appoint a stenographic reporter to take and report its debates, as appears by its Journal.

He was of a scholarly disposition, but more inclined to close study of few books than research in many. He was a good Latin scholar and thoroughly read in the English classics. He always had an apt quotation from the Bible, Virgil, Horace, Addison, Pope, Milton, or Shakespeare, to meet any occasion. He was quick in thought and speech, but an essayist rather than a debater. He was quite critical in the use

Josiah Henry Benton
1863

of words and somewhat inclined to phrase-making, but withal an easy and accurate writer and speaker. JOSIAH HENRY BENTON 1816

He wrote his set sermons on "sermon paper" with painstaking care, and read them as written, which was then the custom in his denomination. But he also preached many extemporaneous sermons, as they were then called. The notes for these, however, were always carefully and neatly written out upon sheets of note paper stitched together. These notes he called "skeletons" and his "extemporaneous discourse" always faithfully followed the points and substance of these skeletons.

In addresses and speeches he pursued the same course. Nothing was left to chance or to the inspiration of the moment. I am inclined to think he would have been a stronger and more effective speaker if he had given himself more latitude of thought and expression.

He was, however, a fluent, forcible speaker, of good presence and voice, with excellent capacity to please and persuade.

His political convictions were strong and he never hesitated to express them. He was an old-fashioned Whig, and had the greatest admiration for Clay and Webster. I well remember his sermon on the death of Webster. It was from the text: "The chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof." But he was an earnest anti-slavery man, and severely condemned Mr. Webster's "Seventh of March speech," in support of the fugitive slave law of 1850, saying it was "not only a famous speech, but an infamous speech." In 1856 he made political speeches in Iowa and in Vermont, in support of General Frémont, the Republican candidate for President, and replied with what seems now to have been undue and bitter, but certainly most effective, language, to the criticism then made of "political priests," as the other party called all ministers who spoke and preached against slavery.

The picture is from a photograph taken at Bradford, Vermont, about 1863.

Josiah Henry and Martha (Danforth) Benton had the following children:—

THOMAS HENRY, born July 4, 1842, at Waterford, Vermont; died July 5, 1842, at Waterford.

JOSIAH HENRY BENTON 1816

JOSIAH HENRY, JR., born August 4, 1843, at Addison, Vermont.

MARTHA ELLEN, born December 3, 1845, at Addison, Vermont.

MARY ISABELLA, born November 15, 1848, at Northfield, Vermont; died October 10, 1865, at Maquoketa, Iowa.

FRANKLIN, born June 10, 1851, at Port Huron, Michigan; died August 26, 1852, at Port Huron.

ROBERT FULLER, born February 26, 1854, at Clinton, Michigan; died November 12, 1865, at Maidstone, Vermont.

Josiah Henry and Harriet (Niles) Benton have the following children born at Bradford, Vermont:—

SAMUEL SLADE, born January 10, 1858.

HARRIET MARIA, born February 3, 1859.

BENJAMIN BUTLER, born June 24, 1863.

And the following children born at Maidstone, Vermont:—

JOSEPH, born December 7, 1866.

CAROLINE ESTHER, born June 7, 1870.

HUGH HENRY, born January 19, 1872.

JOHN EDWIN, born May 14, 1875.

MARY EDITH, born September 3, 1878.

Josiah Henry, Jr., married Josephine Emery, daughter of Richard Ransom and Emma (Heath) Aldrich, at Bradford, Vermont, May 19, 1866. She was born August 10, 1842, at Newbury, Vermont; she died April 8, 1872, at Bradford, Vermont, and is there buried. They had no children.

He married second, Mary Elizabeth, daughter of Charles D. and Laurinda (Holbrook) Abbott, at Concord, New Hampshire, September 2, 1875. She was born February 22, 1843, at Nashua, New Hampshire. They have no children.

Martha Ellen married Charles Fisher, October 6, 1868, at Lancaster, New Hampshire. They have one child:—

Mary Benton, born August 14, 1887, at North Haverhill, New Hampshire.

Samuel Slade married Etta May, daughter of George Henry and Kate Emma (Sweet) Bean, December 8, 1897, at Lancaster, New Hampshire. She was born January 17, 1879, at Maidstone, Vermont. They have two children, born at Maidstone, Vermont:—

Esther Prouty, born September 7, 1898.

Gladys Marion, born March 2, 1900.

Harriet Maria married George Albert Balch, son of George Sherman and Mary Eliza (Glines) Balch, who was born September 27, 1855, on June 27, 1881, at Maidstone, Vermont. They have no children.

Benjamin Butler married Carrie Asenath, daughter of Sereno Dwight and Phœbe (Bartlett) Carlton, who was born at Lunenburg, Vermont, July 4, 1865, on October 28, 1886, at Lancaster, New Hampshire. They have three children:—

Paul Amasa, born November 19, 1887, at Guildhall, Vermont.

Dwight, born June 25, 1893, at Guildhall, Vermont.

Louise, born July 1, 1897, at Lancaster, New Hampshire.

Joseph married Annie, daughter of Jonathan Steele and Abigail Haines (Hoyt) Chesley, who was born March 6, 1864, at Epsom, New Hampshire, on October 16, 1895, at Concord, New Hampshire. They have no children.

Hugh Henry married Mary Abbie, daughter of Charles Fitch and Eliza Dorinda (Winter) Morse, who was born at Atkinson, New Hampshire, May 16, 1873, on December 31, 1894, at St. Johnsbury, Vermont. They have two children:—

Robert Hugh, born November 30, 1895, at St. Johnsbury, Vermont.

Harold Morse, born August 22, 1897, at St. Johnsbury, Vermont.

Susan Mabel Benton

1818

Susan Mabel Benton

1818

SUSAN MABEL, the tenth child and youngest daughter of Samuel Slade and Esther (Prouty) Benton, was born April 1, 1818, at Waterford, Vermont. Her middle name, Mabel, was for her aunt, Mabel Benton Worcester, but I have not been able to ascertain why she was given her first name, Susan. When she was eleven years old her father removed from Waterford to St. Johnsbury, and I understand she attended the common schools there and several terms at the Essex County Grammar School.

January 12, 1840, she was admitted to the North Congregational Church at St. Johnsbury by profession. December 23, 1841, when she was twenty-three years old, she married Lawton Rockwell, who was born in Southwick, Massachusetts, February 20, 1817. They were married at St. Johnsbury, Vermont, but I understand Mr. Rockwell was then a travelling salesman, or engaged in mercantile pursuits of some kind, and lived in Boston, Massachusetts, where they at once went to live. Their children were:—

EDWIN LAWTON ROCKWELL, born October 22, 1845, at 60 Billerica Street, Boston, and who died April 20, 1850, at 8 Morton Place, Boston.

EDWIN LAWTON ROCKWELL 2nd, born October 25, 1851, at 1 Tremont Place, Boston, and who died April 22, 1853, at 1 Tremont Place, Boston.

JULIUS BENTON ROCKWELL, who was born August 21, 1860, at 74 Beach Street, Chelsea, Massachusetts.

September 2, 1848, she was dismissed by letter from the church at St. Johnsbury to the Mt. Vernon Church, Boston, of which she afterwards remained a member. She was a brilliant woman, much interested in music, having a fine contralto voice. In November, 1857, she wrote to her brother Jacob from Boston, saying among other things, "I am trying

SUSAN MABEL BENTON 1818

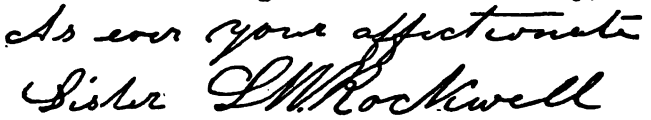
very hard each day of my life to improve in music. I have a Mr. Evarts, a German teacher."

I saw her at her father's (my grandfather's) funeral at Newbury, Vermont, December 15, 1857, and remember well her striking appearance. She was large, handsome, well dressed, in the conventional black silk of the time, etc. She talked with me, and I very much admired her.

The picture is from one taken after she was partially deranged, but which is the only one now to be found.

I never saw her after that, but she grew worse and finally developed marked insanity, and September 13, 1860, she was placed in an asylum for the insane, and has ever since been hopelessly deranged.

This is a facsimile of her signature to a letter in 1857.



After Mrs. Rockwell was placed in an asylum, her son, Julius Benton Rockwell, then the only child and a baby, was taken by his uncle, Jacob Benton of Lancaster, New Hampshire, who had no children. He kept him without formal adoption but expecting to bring him up as his own child. Unfortunate differences arose, however, between the child's father and uncle, and in 1867 or 1868, the child was retaken by his father. He was strikingly like his mother in appearance, and grew up a very handsome young man. January 6, 1880, he married Abigail G. Lynch at Boston. They had one child, Joseph Lawton Rockwell, born at Boston, January 4, 1881. They finally left Boston in 1882 or 1883; since when I have known nothing of their whereabouts.

Her husband was in the produce business in Boston for many years, but finally became reduced in circumstances and was admitted to the Aged Men's Home, Boston, February 23, 1896, where he died September 23, 1898. He was buried at Westfield, Massachusetts, by Mrs. F. A. Latimer, his niece.

Susan Mabel Rockwell
1859

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William Chauncey Benton

1820–1859

William Chauncey Benton

1820–1859

WILLIAM CHAUNCEY BENTON, the sixth son and the eleventh child of Samuel Slade Benton and Esther (Prouty) Benton, was born at Waterford, Vermont, April 19, 1820. His middle name was for his uncle, Chauncey Benton of Hartford, Connecticut. He was eight years old when his father removed from Waterford to St. Johnsbury. He attended school in St. Johnsbury and also, I think, the Peacham and Lyndon Academies. He early developed a capacity for music, both vocal and instrumental. As early as 1839, when he was nineteen years old, he appears by a letter to his parents to have been engaged in carrying on a series of singing schools in Montpelier and vicinity, and the letter indicates that he had previously taught singing schools in that part of Vermont. He states that he had "five schools a week at two dollars and found per night," by which I suppose he means his expenses paid.

He studied medicine at the medical school at Castleton, Vermont, and July 8, 1846, he married Lucretia Minerva Hill, daughter of Joel and Lois (Munson) Hill, of Wallingford, Vermont. They lived in Wallingford for several years, and their first child, Florence, was born there September 2, 1849. They then moved to Burlington, Vermont, and their second child, William Hill, was born there April 28, 1854. He removed in 1857 to Wisconsin, and settled at Beloit, where he lived until his death April 23, 1859. His wife inherited what was then regarded as a large fortune, and he never practised his profession. He was not successful in the management of property, however, and when he died most of the property had been lost. He left no will and little property of his own.

His widow resided in Beloit until about 1871, when she went to Hastings, Minnesota, to live with her daughter Florence, who was then Mrs. Isham. She died and was buried at Hastings, Minnesota, March 19, 1872. I never saw my Uncle

WILLIAM CHAUNCEY BENTON 1820

William, but I remember when he and his wife went West, and hearing the matter discussed in the family. He expected to increase their property by investment in Western lands, and I think a considerable portion if not all of his wife's property was thus invested before the panic of 1857. At all events, most of the property was lost by investment in land, and his widow was left with limited means.

They had two children:—

Florence Alena, born September 2, 1849, at Wallingford, Vermont.

William Hill, born April 28, 1854, at Burlington, Vermont.

Florence Alena married Frank D. Isham at Beloit, Wisconsin, November 14, 1868. He was engaged in business at Hastings, Minnesota, and subsequently lived at Delevan, Wisconsin. Some time after 1875 he and his wife were divorced. Florence inherited the musical ability of her father, and she then supported herself and child by teaching music. December 23, 1883, she married Edward W. Jenks of Chicago. They now live at Edgewater, which is a suburb of Chicago. She has only one child, Edgar Benton Isham, who was born at Wilmar, Minnesota, April 1, 1873, and now lives in Chicago.

William Hill Benton married June 17, 1889, at Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Emma Viola Hedden, who was born at Lodi, Michigan, March 28, 1849. They have no children and now live in Denver, Colorado.

This is a facsimile of William Chauncey Benton's signature to a letter written in 1855.

The picture is from a daguerreotype taken about 1855.

William Chauncey Benton
1855

Charles Emerson Benton

1825–1892

Charles Emerson Benton

1825–1892

CHARLES EMERSON BENTON was the seventh son and the twelfth child of Samuel Slade and Esther (Prouty) Benton. He was named for his Cousin Charles, a son of his Uncle Chauncey.

He was born at Waterford, Vermont, December 11, 1825, and was a child of between three and four years when his father moved to St. Johnsbury. When his father moved to Lancaster, New Hampshire, Charles was about seventeen years old. He was educated at the public schools in St. Johnsbury and at the St. Johnsbury Academy. In the fall of 1844, when he was nineteen, he attended St. Johnsbury Academy, going there from Lancaster, where his father lived.

He remained with his father on the farm at Lancaster until it was sold and his father went to Newbury in 1847, when he was twenty-two, and he went with his parents, being the only child then at home. He there lived with them unmarried until October 21, 1856, when he married Adda, daughter of Abner and Mary (Haseltine) Chamberlin of Newbury, Vermont. November 6, 1856, he bought of his father the place at Newbury, where his father and mother and he lived. After the death of his father in 1857, his mother went to live with her eldest daughter, Mrs. Stoddard, at Waterford, Vermont, and Charles and his family remained on the place at Newbury until April, 1860, when he sold the place and removed to Guildhall, Vermont, where he purchased a farm on the river road, north of the Lancaster toll bridge, known as the Dennison farm. Here he lived and carried on the farm until the fall of 1865, when he was appointed county clerk. March 16, 1866, he sold his farm and purchased a place in the village of Guildhall near the court house, where he lived until his death. He was county clerk from 1865 to his death in June, 1892, a period of about twenty-seven years. He was a very popular man, very much liked and respected

CHARLES EMERSON BENTON 1825

by his neighbors and townspeople, and held many offices. In 1863, 1869, 1870, and 1872 he served as lister. In 1863, 1864, 1865, 1870, 1872, 1873, 1880, and 1888 he was moderator at all the town meetings held in those years. He served as grand juror in 1862 and 1865. Before he was clerk, in 1864, he was one of the selectmen. He was fence-viewer in 1875, 1879, 1880, 1881, and 1888. He was chosen town auditor from 1864 to 1890, with the exception of the years 1871, 1880, 1881, 1882, and 1883. He was town agent in 1880, 1881, 1882, 1884, and 1889; deputy town clerk in 1884, and town treasurer in the years 1886, 1887, and 1888, and during these three years he was also a trustee of the surplus revenue. He also served as overseer of the poor and sealer of weights and measures in 1869, and superintendent of schools in 1873. He was representative from Guildhall in the General Assembly in 1866 and 1867, and was Senator in the State Senate from the Essex District in 1874 and 1875. He was County Treasurer from 1886 to 1892. He was Register of Probate in 1884, and was Judge of Probate for Essex County from December 1, 1888, to the time of his death, in 1892.

He was a large, handsome man, with the black eyes of his mother, and of a somewhat indolent disposition. His judgment was good. He had a keen sense of justice, was patient and amiable. He was selected as auditor and referee in many cases, and his decisions were generally accepted as sound and satisfactory.

He became a member of the Congregational Church at Guildhall by profession, July 6, 1879, and in the latter part of his life was, I understand, quite active in church matters, though he became estranged from the Congregational Church after a while and worshipped at the Methodist Church for a short time, but then returned. He was a kind-hearted, amiable, likable man, fond of his family and his friends, and so far as I knew or have ever heard, everybody whom he met was his friend. He was an ardent and consistent Republican, and served as a member of the State committee of that party for ten consecutive years, and when he was a candidate for office he always ran ahead of his ticket, and I think was never defeated.

He died at Guildhall, June 11, 1892, and is buried at Lan-

Charles Emerson Benton
1856

caster, New Hampshire.

CHARLES EMERSON BENTON 1825

The accompanying picture is from one in the possession of his son, Everett C. Benton, and is an excellent likeness of him as I first remember him in 1856.

In the General Assembly of 1866 he was chairman of the standing committee of the House on land titles, and served on the select committee upon the State Normal School. He voted for Luke P. Poland, as United States Senator, to fill the unexpired term of Jacob Collamer, deceased, and for George F. Edmunds to fill the unexpired term of Solomon Foot, deceased. He also voted for the ratification of the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution, and for a joint resolution declaring that before the Southern States were admitted to representation in Congress they ought to be required to adopt the Fourteenth Amendment and elect men to Congress who were and "always had been loyal to the general government." The temper of Vermont on this matter is shown by the fact that one hundred and ninety-six voted to adopt the Fourteenth Amendment and eleven against it, and one hundred and ninety-two for this resolution and only twelve against it.

He introduced a bill, which was passed, increasing the fees of jurors, and voted for an act, which was defeated, to provide for a monument over the grave of Thomas Chittenden. He voted for a joint resolution declaring it to be "the exclusive right of Congress to prescribe the terms whereby the rebellious States may resume their former relations to the government," and commended the course of Congress in its controversy upon that matter with the President, Andrew Johnson. He supported and voted for an act to provide for "the restoration and preservation of fish in the waters of Vermont," also for an act to increase the pay of members of the General Assembly.

There was another Benton, a member of the House at this session,—Elijah F. Benton, of Waltham, Addison County,—and the two Bentons appear to have generally voted together, but upon this act to increase the pay of the members, they did not. He voted against an act, which passed the House but was defeated in the Senate, to revise and amend the militia law of the State, and also against an act to tax shares in

CHARLES EMERSON BENTON 1825

private corporations, which was defeated. He does not appear by the Journal of the House to have promoted any special legislation, or to have been particularly active in the business of the House.

At the session of 1867 he was chairman of the standing committee of the House on land taxes, and was also a member of the committee on mileage and debentures. He voted for a resolution of inquiry as to the expediency of a general law to enable towns to aid in the construction of railroads, there being at that time numerous applications for authority by towns to aid railroad construction. He voted for an act to enable towns to aid in construction of the Lamoille Valley Railroad, which, after much opposition and repeated roll-calls, was passed. He also voted for an act to permit interest above the statutory rate to be taken by agreement of parties, which failed. He voted for an act "to assist indigent young men and women to qualify as teachers," and for an act, which was defeated, to amend and revise the militia law. Also for an act to enable towns to aid in the construction of the Montpelier and Wells River Railroad, which was defeated by a vote of seventy-four to eighty-two. He voted against the report of the committee on elections to unseat the member from Bradford, who was a Democrat. He voted for an act to enable towns to establish "central schools," and for an act, which was defeated, to enable certain towns to aid in the construction of the Wells River Railroad. He voted for an act, which was passed, providing that no railroad should charge in Vermont any larger sum for freight or passengers for a less than for a greater distance on its road. He also voted for a joint resolution, which was adopted one hundred ninety-four to fourteen, declaring "that in the unhappy conflict of opinions between Congress and the Executive Department of the National Government in relation to the policy to be pursued in the reconstruction of States lately in rebellion, we heartily approve the action of Congress," etc. He does not appear to have promoted legislation to any extent by the introduction of bills, or to have been particularly active, so far as the Journal shows, in the business of the session.

In 1874, as a member of the State Senate from Essex County,

he was the chairman of the standing committee on land taxes, a member of the judiciary committee, and served on the committees to canvass votes for State officers, and to canvass votes for the third Congressional District. He was also chairman of the select committee on a bill to constitute a new county by the name of Allen, and was a member of the select committee to divide the State into Congressional Districts. He voted for George F. Edmunds for Senator for six years, for a bill to incorporate E. and T. Fairbanks a company, which met with opposition, but was passed; also for a bill to require notice to towns and to exempt towns from liability in case of injuries on highways except in case of gross negligence; and also to provide that the person injured should not be a witness in a suit against the town. This bill was defeated eleven to sixteen. He voted against an act, which was passed, providing that the liquor law should apply to the manufacture and sale of domestic wines for medicinal purposes. He voted against an act in amendment of the liquor law making the seller of any portion of the liquor to a person who became intoxicated thereby responsible for all the damage such intoxicated person might do while intoxicated and to provide that husband and wife could testify against each other in prosecutions under the act, but this act was passed seventeen to thirteen. He voted against the third reading of an act to prohibit passes, which was defeated by a vote of three to twenty-seven. He voted against a bill to constitute a new county by the name of Allen, which was defeated seven to twenty-two, and reported from his committee a bill, which was passed, providing for the appraisal of real estate which had been omitted from the quadrennial appraisal. He also voted for an act "to place inmates of insane asylums under the protection of the laws," which provided for a board of visitors of such institutions, etc., but after this bill had been seriously amended he voted against it, and it failed of passage thirteen to fifteen. He voted against an act to authorize chairs to be made in the Reform School, about which there seems to have been much contest; also against a bill to increase the taxation of savings banks, which was defeated. He voted for a bill to permit more than the statutory rate of interest to be taken by agreement, but the bill was de-

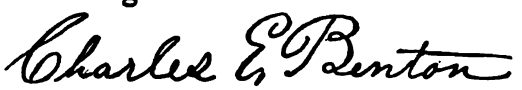
CHARLES EMERSON BENTON 1825

CHARLES EMERSON BENTON 1825

feated nine to seventeen. He voted against a bill reported from the judiciary committee, of which he was a member, in relation to the qualification of judges and chancellors, which passed the Senate, fifteen to seventeen, but was, I think, defeated in the House. He also actively supported and voted for an act, which was passed, requiring notice to towns by persons claiming damages for injuries on highways. He appears to have been more active in the business of the Senate than he was in the business of the House, but he introduced very few bills, and only one private bill, so far as I can ascertain, that being an act to incorporate the Guildhall Aqueduct Company, a peculiarity of which was that it named no persons as corporators, but simply provided that "such persons as shall hereafter become stockholders are hereby constituted a body politic," etc.

At a special session of the Senate in January, 1875, which was called by reason of the destruction of the State Reform School by fire, he was on the select committee to provide for a new building, also on the select committee on an act as to the commitment of boys to the Reform School. He voted for an appropriation of fifty thousand dollars instead of thirty thousand dollars for the Reform School building, and he voted against a bill entitled "An Act to secure liberty of conscience to inmates of all State institutions."

This is a facsimile of his signature.



Charles Emerson Benton and Adda (Chamberlin) Benton had three children:—

CHARLES ABNER, born August 12, 1857, at Newbury, Vermont, who died August 20, 1877, at Guildhall, Vermont.

EVERETT CHAMBERLIN, born September 25, 1862, at Guildhall, Vermont.

JAY BAYARD, born April 10, 1870, at Guildhall, Vermont.

Everett Chamberlin Benton married Willena Blanche, daughter of Samuel T. and Harriet (Willis) Rogers, of Pugwash, Nova Scotia, on January 24, 1885, at Charlestown, Massachusetts. They have had the following children:—

Jay Rogers, born October 18, 1885, at Somerville, Massachusetts.

Charles Everett, born May 7, 1887, at Belmont, Massachusetts.

Blanche Avola, born March 14, 1889, at Belmont.

Ruth Chamberlin, born April 23, 1893, at Belmont; died June 16, 1894, at Belmont.

Dorothy Draper, born August 19, 1894, at Belmont.

Hannah Slade, born February 5, 1899.

Everett Chamberlin Benton has been a member of the Governor's Council and prominent in Massachusetts State affairs. He lives at Belmont and is in the insurance business.

Jay Bayard Benton is a graduate of Dartmouth College and is unmarried. He lives at Winchester, Massachusetts, and is the city editor of the *Boston Transcript*.

Reuben Clark Benton, Jr.

1830–1895

Reuben Clark Benton, Jr.

1830–1895

REUBEN CLARK BENTON, Jr., was the first child of Reuben C. and Almira (Fletcher) Benton, and the oldest grandchild of Samuel Slade Benton and Esther (Prouty) Benton. He was born at Waterford, Vermont, May 13, 1830. His father did not give him a college education, which he desired. He therefore worked on the farm at home, attending the district school in Waterford and the Academy in St. Johnsbury, and making all the preparation for college he could, until he was twenty-one years of age. During the last year of his minority he also studied law somewhat with his Uncle Jacob Benton at Lancaster, New Hampshire, and with William Heywood at Guildhall, Vermont. In 1851 he became of age, and within ten days thereafter he entered the Vermont University at Burlington, Vermont, in the third term of the freshman year, and paid his own way through college by teaching during the winters. He graduated in 1854, and then became principal of the Academy at Johnson, Lamoille County, Vermont, and at the same time studied law. He was admitted to practice in Lamoille County, Vermont, in the latter part of the year 1855.

March 18, 1856, at Johnson, he married Sara Maria, daughter of Charles and Lucy (Perkins) Leland of Johnson, who was born at Lowell, Vermont, March 7, 1836.

In September, 1856, he was chosen assistant clerk of the Senate of the General Assembly of Vermont, and served during that session. He was reëlected assistant clerk at the September session, 1857, and entered upon the discharge of his duties, but on October 11, he resigned on account of the illness and sudden death of his father. In 1858 he moved to Hyde Park, Vermont, and formed a partnership with John A. Child of that place. In 1860 he was chosen State's Attorney for Lamoille County, and was reëlected in 1861.

August 28, 1861, he was commissioned as captain of Com-

REUBEN CLARK BENTON, JUNIOR 1830

pany D, Fifth Vermont Volunteers, which was mustered into the United States service September 1, 1861. The regiment went immediately into service with the army of Virginia, and Captain Benton was wounded July 29, 1862, at the battle of Savage Station.

August 26, 1862, he was promoted and commissioned as lieutenant colonel of the Eleventh Regiment Vermont Volunteers. In the following winter of 1863, this regiment was made into the First Vermont Heavy Artillery, and was placed with other regiments in the defences of Washington, where they remained until May 12, 1864, when as a part of the forward movement of General Grant upon Richmond, they were ordered into active service at the front as an infantry regiment. The regiment joined Grant's army as a part of the Vermont Brigade, and was engaged first in the battle of Spottsylvania Court House, where, on May 17, Colonel Warner, commanding the regiment, was severely wounded, and the regiment was commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Benton until June 21.

May 20, the regiment fought at Guiney's Station. It then made a forced march of forty hours out of forty-seven. June 1, it fought at Cold Harbor, and June 3, it fought in the second action of Cold Harbor. It then held advance lines in the movement across the James on June 12.

This regiment was in three battalions of eight platoon companies, each battalion serving as a full infantry regiment, and was larger than any brigade in the division. (*Report Lieutenant Colonel Benton, Appendix C, Adjutant General's Report of Vermont*, 1864.)

The nature of their service appears in the report of the adjutant general, where he says: —

"For twelve days before June 12, the brigade in taking part in the flank movement against Lee's Army, had been under an incessant fire of musketry and artillery. The front line was constantly engaged. The regiments occupied the front by turns, a change being made each night."

The Eleventh had not been accustomed to marching or fighting, having never marched over four miles a day before. This severe service caused Colonel Benton to fall ill of malarial

Reuben Clark Benton
1863

fever and enter hospital on June 10, where he remained until June 21, when he resigned. At the time of his resignation he had served his three years' term of service less three months. "He had commanded his regiment with ability and bravery, and in his departure it lost a capable and resolute commander." (Benedict's *Vermont in the Civil War*, Vol. 2, p. 356.) REUBEN CLARK BENTON, JUNIOR 1830

After his return, as soon as he was in health, he resumed the practice of his profession alone, his partner, Mr. Child, having died during his absence. In 1868 he removed to St. Albans, Vermont, which was then a place of much business promise. Here he was engaged in a general and extensive practice, and being much interested in education he served during several years as chairman of the school board, and in 1874 he was a member of the Vermont State Board of Education.

In June, 1875, he removed to Minneapolis, Minnesota, where he practised his profession during the remainder of his life.

In 1879, 1880, and 1881, he was the corporation counsel of the city of Minneapolis, resigning in December, 1881. From 1875, when he went to Minneapolis, until December, 1881, he was in partnership with his younger brother, Caleb Henry Benton. Upon his resignation as corporation counsel in 1881, he was appointed counsel of the St. Paul, Minneapolis and Manitoba Railroad Company, and when that company was consolidated with the Great Northern Railroad Company he was continued as counsel of the consolidated company.

He took much interest in public affairs, and served upon the Board of Trade, and in various other representative capacities in city matters. He was an active member of the Loyal Legion, and was elected commander of the Minnesota Commandery in 1894. December 30, 1894, he suffered a stroke of paralysis, and January 8, 1895, he died at his home in Minneapolis. He was a large, strong man of impressive presence and dignified manner, and an effective and pleasing speaker. He was of a decidedly studious and scholarly disposition, and had an excellent legal mind. I have known few men who so quickly and fully mastered, and so clearly and

REUBEN CLARK BENTON, JUNIOR 1830

accurately stated the facts of a complicated case, or who applied the law to the facts of a case with equal ability.

He was of rather phlegmatic temperament, and rarely spoke or wrote much on matters outside of professional duties. I find but one publication by him: *The Vermont Settlers and the New York Land Speculators*, published in 1894. This is, I think, the most complete and accurate statement of the famous controversy in Vermont as to the grants by New York and New Hampshire of the territory within that State. Upon reading it one regrets that the author did not do more work of an historical character.

He was not a man of great business ability, that is, in the sense of making money, and he cared little about money. The practice of his profession brought him what he needed for a comfortable living and he seemed to care little for anything more, although he left, I understand, a reasonable competence at his death.

He was never a member of any church, but used to say that he was a Unitarian as much as anything, although he did not attend that church. His wife and daughters were all members of the Congregational Church, which he usually attended with them.

The following testimonial was spread upon its records by the Minnesota Commandery of the Loyal Legion at its meeting January 15, 1895:—

¶ *In Memoriam Lieutenant Colonel Reuben Clark Benton.*

AT our last annual meeting he was elected our commander, and died in office January 8, 1895.

Although a loving labor, it is not easy to adequately express the full depth of sorrowful regret occasioned by the removal of our honored companion.

As a member of this order we have learned to admire his many noble qualities of mind and heart, and to recognize him as one entitled to the bestowal of its highest honors; and we may congratulate ourselves that before his departure from us we were permitted to crown his closing days in a manner grateful to him and honorable to us.

At the last meeting of this commandery over which he pre-

sided, in conversation with a companion beside him, he referred in words of touching pathos to the possible approaching end of his earthly pilgrimage, and remarked that of all the honors which during his varied career he had won, or failed to win, he regarded most gratefully and proudly the position he then occupied, bestowed by the love and respect of his beloved companions of the Loyal Legion. These words of his characterize, more fittingly than we may hope to do, the supreme qualities of a patriot, soldier and companion. In his profession and as a citizen, no less than as a soldier, Colonel Benton possessed rare qualities of leadership.

REUBEN CLARK BENTON, JUNIOR 1830

He was strong in court, and strong in counsel. Whether in camp or in field, in society or in politics, his opinions commanded instant respect. His ideas were not borrowed. He possessed the native power of "seeing clear and thinking straight." In address he had dignity without ostentation, while his candor and his courtesy were never simulated. Hence it has come to pass that while he is now elsewhere, the impress of his remarkable personality is yet so vividly present that to emulate his virtues and enshrine his character among our most sacred memories is but the natural, as it is the most grateful and appropriate, tribute, we may offer to the memory of our departed commander, companion, and friend.

The following resolutions were also adopted by the Bar of Hennepin County, Minnesota, January 10, 1895: —

¶ *In Memoriam.*

WE, the Members of the Bar of the City of Minneapolis, deem it proper that we should place upon record some expression of the loss to ourselves and the profession of this State caused by the death of Reuben C. Benton, which occurred on the 8th of January, 1895.

Since the year 1874, he has been one of the most active and successful lawyers of this State, and during this time closely identified himself with the material and moral growth and prosperity of the city which he so much loved. For several years he was city attorney, and at a time when its policy was being shaped for many years to come. Many of the best provisions of the present city charter are the result of his best thought.

REUBEN CLARK BENTON, JUNIOR 1830

He was, indeed, a manly man, and one of the best lawyers in the State. He had been in his early years a close student of the common law and in this branch of jurisprudence had few equals. The common law was not to him a fragmentary confusion of disjointed rules. He had mastered not only its details, but the history out of which it grew, and his vigorous and broad mind grasped it as a system in its full spirit and comprehended the mutual relations and symmetry of all its parts. He well understood that it is not a mere system of municipal law, but that it is, with all its blemishes, the noblest code of personal rights which the world has ever known, which educates man in free and self-reliant manhood, and which has done more than all written systems or constitutions for the nations which are blessed in its possession. He was not a case lawyer, but he was a better lawyer than mere case learning could make. The fundamental principles which underlie all sound judicial decisions were familiar to him, and mainly guided his judgment. The common law was his judicial creed.

His character was singularly solid and firm and his faculties of a high order. He was a thoroughly honest man,—honest with the court, his brother lawyers, his clients and his neighbors. Honesty with him was not a policy, nor confined to questions of morality. His very nature and life were honest; he loved truth for truth's sake, with intense love, and this made him less liable to err in his conclusions of what the law was or ought to be, for no lawyer can be truly great who is not thoroughly honest. His star may shine with brilliancy for a time, but sooner or later will go out in darkness and leave its light in ashes.

He was warm-hearted and sympathetic, a true friend, and always at his best when his sympathies were aroused and enlisted in defence of some client who he thought was being unjustly persecuted. He was then a power to be dreaded by the persecutor. Those only who knew him well, knew that beneath a seemingly rough exterior there was a genuine and noble nature, and that he lived a life of kindness and consideration for all whom he honored with his intimacy. There was nothing small in his nature. His seeming roughness at times was only an excess or overflow of strength.

Reuben Clark Benton
1888

He bore to his grave the profound regard of all who knew him well. His death is not only a great loss to the members of this Association, but to the Bench and Bar of this State. We trust and believe, however, that his useful and blameless life spent among us may still continue to have its good effect. We can all say, as we *do* say, that the world is better because he lived and died.

REUBEN CLARK BENTON, JUNIOR 1830

The following is a facsimile of the signature of Reuben Clark Benton in 1859.

The picture in uniform is from a photograph in the possession of his widow, and was taken in 1863, when he was just recovered from a serious illness. It does not, therefore, do him justice, but is reproduced as the only one in uniform now to be found. The picture in civilian dress is from a photograph taken in 1888, and shows Colonel Benton as he was in his later years.

Sara Leland Benton, the widow of Reuben Clark Benton, now lives in Minneapolis.

Reuben Clark Benton, Jr., and Sara Maria (Leland) Benton had the following children:—

Lucy, born January 4, 1857, at Johnson, Vermont; died April 28, 1882, at Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Mary, born April 7, 1859, at Johnson, Vermont; died February 3, 1882, at Minneapolis, Minnesota.

George M., born December 29, 1860, at Hyde Park, Vermont; died August 13, 1863, at Fort Stevens, Washington, District of Columbia.

Helen, born October 16, 1862, at Hyde Park, Vermont; died August 13, 1863, at Fort Stevens, Washington, District of Columbia.

The oldest daughter, Lucy, married Rollin Milo Douglas, November 30, 1880, at Minneapolis. She left a daughter, Helen Douglas, born October 21, 1881, at Minneapolis, who died July 30, 1884.

Caleb Henry Benton

1841–1890

CALEB HENRY BENTON, the third son and fifth child of Reuben Clark Benton and Almira (Fletcher) Benton, and a grandson of Samuel Slade Benton, was born at Lunenburg, Vermont, February 26, 1841. When his father died in 1857, he was sixteen years old, and attending the grammar school at Johnson, Vermont, where his brother Reuben and his sister Almira had taught. He there fitted for college and in 1860 entered the Vermont University in the freshman class. February 16, 1861, he left college and enlisted from Johnson, Vermont, in Company D, Fifth Regiment Vermont Volunteers. His brother Reuben was captain of this company. December 1, 1861, Caleb Henry Benton was promoted to be sergeant major of the regiment. July 9, 1862, he was promoted to be second lieutenant of Company D. January 24, 1863, he was promoted to be first lieutenant of the same company. September 15, 1864, he was mustered out at the expiration of his three years' term of enlistment.

He was a very brave soldier, conspicuous even in the famous "Vermont Brigade." Both his promotions were for conspicuous bravery in action. He was not off duty for a single day during the entire three years of service, and from February, 1863, until the close of his service he was acting adjutant of the regiment. This Vermont Brigade was the only one in the army with a distinctive name, being known as the "fighting brigade of the fighting corps" (*i.e.*, the Sixth Army Corps). It took part in thirty-seven battles which were officially reported, on an average of about three each thirty days of its services, and marched during that time more than two thousand miles, through Maryland and Virginia.

When Lieutenant Benton's term of enlistment expired, September, 1865, he came home and entered the law school at Albany, New York, from which he graduated in May, 1866. May 25, 1866, he was admitted to the Bar in Lamoille

CALEB HENRY BENTON 1841

County, Vermont, and began practice at Hyde Park, Vermont.

June 25, 1866, he married Flora E. Hadley, of Johnson, Vermont. She died in 1869, and in 1871 he removed from Hyde Park to Minneapolis, Minnesota, where he practised his profession until his death, November 10, 1890.

November 20, 1874, he married at Minneapolis, Jeanette Graham, who was born February 2, 1848, and who died at Minneapolis, November 24, 1885.

I first met him at the Albany Law School in the autumn of 1865, where we were members of the same class. He was not studious, but without any apparent effort maintained a very good position in the class. After our graduation in the spring of 1866, I saw him occasionally until he went to Minneapolis, after which I never met him again. He was a man of good legal instincts, not studious, but strong, sensible, practical, and I understand became a very excellent and capable lawyer. He was much interested in Masonry, being made a Master Mason at Morrisville, Vermont, in February, 1865. He was a member of the Loyal Legion, being admitted to the Minnesota Commandery, October 25, 1887.

This is his signature in middle life.

Upon his death the Bar adopted the following memorial:—

DURING the present year, the bar of Hennepin County has been called upon to mourn the loss, by death, of some of its most distinguished and honored members, and to-day we have again assembled to give expression to a new sorrow on account of the death of another lamented brother, the Hon. C. H. Benton, and place upon record a brief tribute to his exalted worth, and of our respect to his memory.

"Mr. Benton died suddenly at his office on the 10th inst. at the age of 49 years, and although the event was not altogether unexpected to him, but few of his brethren at the bar knew he was in ill health, so uncomplainingly had he carried the secret of his bodily infirmity.

"He died in the full strength of his manhood, and before his sun had scarce reached the meridian. For almost a quarter of a century he was engaged in the active, diligent and successful practice of the law, and had, by his careful study and close application, not only thoroughly trained himself for the practice of his chosen profession, but had attained a high rank among the ablest members of this bar. He was possessed of eminent ability as a lawyer, and excelled in all branches of his profession. He was devoted to the interests of his clients, and they always found in Mr. Benton an honest, honorable and faithful counsellor and advocate. CALEB HENRY BENTON 1841

"He was a man of strong convictions, and always possessed of the courage to maintain them. He was a fearless man; a man of strong and rugged character, but with it all, he was a gentleman. To those who were but slightly acquainted with him, he may have appeared reserved and austere, yet he was one of the most gentle, genial and kind-hearted of men. He loved his friends and was true to them through all the vicissitudes of life, and in return, enjoyed the love, confidence and respect of all who knew him well.

"The early years of his manhood were given to the service of his country in her hour of supreme peril, and for more than three years he shared with his comrade patriots the hardship and perils of war, and cheerfully made profert of his life upon his country's altar. This brief memorial would be far from complete if his bravery and patriotic services to his country were not made conspicuous.

"In the midst of his usefulness he has been removed from earth, and his life work suddenly ended. In his death, the community in which he lived, and the State of his adoption have lost an upright citizen, our profession, one of its most gifted members, and his family of motherless children, a loving and tender father.

"We extend our heartfelt sympathy to the bereaved, and will always honor the name and cherish the memory of our deceased friend.

"We respectfully request the Court to direct that this memorial be entered upon the records of this Court, with such other proceedings as may be had in connection therewith, and

CALEB HENRY BENTON 1841

that a copy thereof be transmitted to the family of the deceased."

The Commandery of the Loyal Legion also adopted the following memorial on December 9, 1890:—

¶ *Lieutenant Caleb Henry Benton.*

CALEB HENRY BENTON was born at Lunenberg, Essex County, Vermont, Feb. 26, 1841. He died suddenly in his office, Minneapolis, Minn., at 12.30 P. M., Nov. 10, 1890, of heart disease.

He became, on Oct. 25, 1887, and remained until death, a member of the Commandery of Minnesota Military Order of the Loyal Legion. This Commandery in his death loses a noble companion, the community in which he lived, a true man, and his children a devoted and loving father. His was a strong, marked character, and wherever he was known he will be missed and mourned. The world is better because he lived, and, but for the memory of the loyal, true and courageous life he lived, it will be far poorer for his untimely death, in the prime of manhood and growing power.

This Commandery . . . attended the funeral services of our deceased companion at Plymouth Church in Minneapolis, from whence he was borne to his last resting place in Lakewood Cemetery on Nov. 14, 1890. He left surviving three minor, motherless children who could illy spare the tender love and care of their father. There is little the living can do to help, and as little say, which can help to fill the great void in the young hearts of our companion's now doubly orphaned children. We may remember them, and, as in duty bound, never allow them to pass beyond the protecting care of our companionship. . . . In our hearts we have individually erected memorials of his life and worth. For those nearer to him than ourselves, it is well that we *record* our estimate of his life and character.

. . . . . .

The fittest memorial this Commandery can erect to the memory of our late Companion Benton, is a recital of the events of his life as a soldier and as a citizen. Born of stalwart stock, our companion was a typical Green Mountain boy, in robust frame and in sturdy, sterling manhood. His

Caleb Henry Benton
1863

CALEB HENRY BENTON 1841

life was uneventful as a boy and passed in such occupation as, in that day and generation, was the common lot of the hardy, self-reliant sons of our Northern farms. He received such education as his apt and ready mind could gather in the common schools and academies of Vermont, had taught a term or two and spent one year in college, when, at the age of twenty, in obedience to the call of the governor of his state, in July, 1861, he enlisted in his country's defense. He was mustered, Aug. 21, 1861, as private in Company "D," Fifth Regiment Vermont Infantry, United States Volunteers. . . . From muster-in till muster-out, he was not absent from his command a single day. . . . He had no hospital record during his entire service, and while others allowed themselves to become sick amid the inglorious occupation of camp life, or on the lone picket, or the never-ending drill, we can see him bite that thin lip, so well known to all of us, and take hold of the tasks his superiors appointed him, with the same grim determination to conquer, exhibited in these later years, when handling many important but as hard and unpleasant tasks.

Dec. 1, 1861, he was promoted sergeant major of his regiment in recognition of the capabilities he had thus early displayed as a soldier. He marched with his regiment to engage in the unfortunate "Peninsula" campaign in the spring of 1862. From the day he broke camp to enter upon that campaign until the end of his service, was for him a daily record, full of perils, privations and sufferings. He was with his regiment . . . at the battles and engagements of Lee's Mill, Williamsburg, . . . Savage Station, Malvern Hill, . . . Antietam, First and Second Fredericksburg, . . . Chancellorsville, Gettysburg, . . . Rappahannock Station, . . . the "Wilderness," at Spottsylvania, Cold Harbor, . . . and wound up his service in the fight of Aug. 21, 1864, at Charlestown, Va., and was mustered out Sept. 15, 1864.

. . . . . .

At Savage Station the Fifth Vermont rendered conspicuous service, losing nearly half of its men in killed and wounded. Companion Benton for gallantry on that occasion, was im-

CALEB HENRY BENTON 1841

mediately thereafter recommended for, and on July 9, 1862, received, promotion to second lieutenant of Company "D" of his regiment. . . . And on Jan. 24, 1863, received further promotion, as first lieutenant of his company, for brave and meritorious conduct during the preceding campaign. Early in February, 1863, he was detailed acting adjutant of his regiment and until the close of his service filled that position with conspicuous ability, and rendered therein magnificent service to his regiment and to his country.

. . . . . .

The foregoing is a brilliant record of faithful, loyal service of which our companion, living, and his children hereafter, may justly be proud. It was virtually three years of service in tent or bivouac, except during two months in 1863, when the regiment was sent to New York during the draft riots. It was a service of the most unalloyed privation and exposure. We looked upon our companion as a strong, sturdy man. He was; but running the eye back over the foregoing record of his services, we may readily see that the seeds of the fell destroyer which at last struck him down at the post of duty in civil life may have been planted in him during that brave, unstinted and unselfish service for his country.

. . . . . .

His country received the first efforts of his young manhood. . . . Once more in civil life, he immediately began preparation for his future civil career. He entered the Albany Law School and graduated therefrom in 1866. He began the practice of law in South Troy, in his native state.

. . . . . .

In 1871 he . . . located in Minneapolis, where, for nearly twenty years, he has lived in the active duties of his chosen profession,—the law,—in which he grew to, and commanded, an honorable and deservedly high position. . . .

While always active in the exercise of the full rights, privileges, and duties of American citizenship and an *active* partisan, believing in and never backward in supporting the principles which his party represented, he was not in any sense an

offensive one. He was never a candidate for an elective office, but for nearly two terms served the city of his adoption as its attorney with faithful and distinguished ability. CALEB HENRY BENTON 1841

From early manhood he was a member of the masonic fraternity, and held the highest offices and honors within the gift of that institution in its subordinate lodges and its Grand Lodge. . . . He was among the very ablest and most distinguished Masons in the State of Minnesota, and had masonic acquaintance by travel and otherwise throughout the world.

He was a member of George N. Morgan Post, No. 4, G. A. R.

. . . . . .

To the doubly orphaned children this Commandery sends assurances of most solicitous care, and records its belief that the rough granite block, brought by our late companion from his own New England hills, under the shadow of which he lies, is a fit monument for one whose character, however rough in exterior, was within as true and solid and as firm as the massive stone which, in beautiful Lakewood, marks his last resting place on earth.

The Masonic order also adopted the following:—

In Deo Fiducia Nostra. Supreme Council of the Thirty-third Degree of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite for the Southern Jurisdiction of the United States. Sam E. Adams, 33° *Inspector General for Minnesota. Orient of Minneapolis, the* 10*th day of November*, 1890, *C. E.*

To the Brethren and Bodies of the Obedience of our Supreme Council in Minnesota:

Sorrow! Sorrow! Sorrow!

From the regions of the North this morning, the freezing winds came to us unwelcomed. A thousand fold more so is the appalling news of the sudden demise of Caleb Henry Benton.

At meridian this day he was stricken down in his office with heart disease, and instantly life became extinct. Only the clayey casket of a noble man remains. Verily, the dark shadow of Death is in our valley!

CALEB HENRY BENTON 1841

Leaves have their time to fall,
And flowers to wither at the north-wind's breath
And stars to set,—but all,
Thou hast all seasons for thine own, O Death.

Brother Benton was born in Lunenburg, Vermont, Feb. 26, 1841; entered the Vermont University at Burlington in 1860; enlisted in the Fifth Vermont Volunteers in '61, and was mustered out, Adjutant, Sept. 19, '63. He graduated at the Albany Law School in '66; came to Minneapolis in '71, and was City Attorney from December, '81 to April, '83.

He was made, February, '65, a Master Mason in Mount Vernon Lodge, No. 8, Morrisville, Vermont. He received the capitular degrees in Saint Anthony Falls Chapter, No. 3, the cryptic in Adoniram Council, No. 5, and was created a Knight Templar in Darius Commandery, No. 7, all in '79. He was Senior Warden of the Grand Lodge in '78, Deputy Grand Master in '79 and '80, and Grand Master in '82 and '83. He was frequently on the most important Grand Lodge committees, and wherever placed, his work was faithfully, conscientiously and well done. His dissection and scourge of Cerneauism at the last meeting of the Grand Lodge, revealed the power, truth and justice of a distinguished man and mason.

He received the Scottish Rite degrees of the Southern Jurisdiction in '79, was Venerable Master three years of Minneapolis Consistory, No. 2, from its organization by Deputy G. W. Merrill, March 27, '80, and was coronetted Inspector General Honorary, September 6, '83. He also received the Royal Order of Scotland (of which there can never be in the United States more than one hundred and fifty members) at Washington December 10, '87, from the hands of the Provincial Grand Master, Albert Pike.

He was a man whom it was well to know, for he always imparted instruction without pedantry. His legal associates say of him, he "had attained a high rank among the ablest members of the bar; his clients always found in him an honest, honorable and faithful counselor and advocate; he loved his friends and was true to them through all the vicissitudes of life." This is truly a grand tribute to an illustrious man.

Caleb Henry Benton
1888

There is one less to share the burdens of daily life, one less in the small family circle, one less of generous, noble-hearted men to bestow benefactions upon the unfortunate and the destitute, one less patriot, one less loyal, loving brother. Though dead he still lives. Though daily missed he is not lost to us. The memory of his good deeds will last forever. "Death is the end of them only who have done nothing to cause their names to live after them."

This letter will be read aloud, upon its reception, in each body of our obedience; the altars and working tools of each draped in black sixty days; during which time let each brother wear the proper badge of mourning!

May our Father who is in Heaven have us, and all who are sorrowful and afflicted, always in His holy keeping.

SAM. E. ADAMS 33°
Inspector General for Minnesota.

The picture in citizen's dress is from a photograph taken in 1888. The picture in uniform is from a photograph taken in 1863.

Caleb Henry Benton and Flora (Hadley) Benton had the following children:—

SAMUEL SLADE, born March 18, 1868, at Troy, Vermont; died March 23, 1868, at Troy.

NANCY BELL, born April 25, 1869, at Troy, Vermont; died September 17, 1869, at St. Albans, Vermont.

Caleb Henry and Jeanette (Graham) Benton had the following children, all born at Minneapolis, Minnesota.

CHRISTIANA MAY, born July 13, 1876.

HENRY GRAHAM, born December 7, 1878.

MABEL JEANETTE, born November 20, 1882.

Benton Coats of Arms

Coats of Arms borne by English Families of Benton

Benton—Wiltshire

I

Sa. five fusils in bend ar. Crest—*on a mount vert a lamb carrying a flag az.*

II

Sa. (another, *az.*) *a bend ar.*

III

Sa. six fusils in bend ar. Crest—*a griffin's head erased ar.*

IV

Ar. a saltire engr. sa.

V

Chequy or and az. (oldest).

VI

Or, a lion ramp. az. fretty ar.

The above is taken from Burke's *General Armory* and is collated with the descriptions given in Robson's *British Herald.* Illustrations follow of the arms mentioned above.

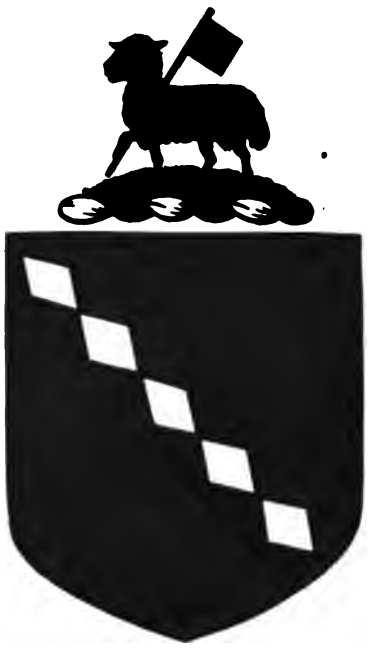
¶

Berry, *Dictionary of Arms*, gives seven Benton shields, the following being number—

VII

Ar. three saltiers engrailed sa.

I



Sa. five fusils in bend ar. Crest—*on a mount vert a lamb carrying a flag az.*

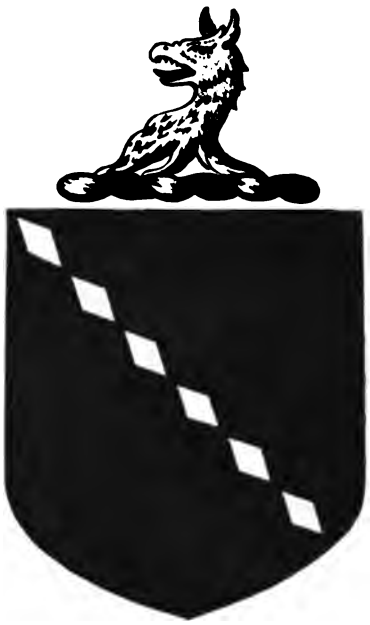
II

Sa. a bend ar.

II (another)

Az. a bend ar.

III



Sa. six fusils in bend ar.
Crest—*a griffin's head erased ar.*

IV

Ar. a saltire engr. sa.

V

Chequy or and az.

VI

Or, a lion ramp. az. fretty ar.

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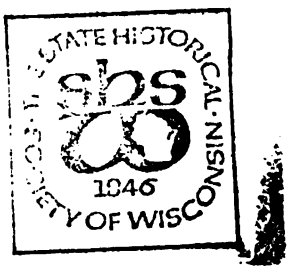

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